

INTERVIEW

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MARCO MASTROSANTI

Italians? They Rule!

Editorial

Production, exports and consumption: from pasta to pastries, from wine to olive oil, from cured meats to fresh meat, from fish to cheese and much more, the Italian way continues to set the standard. Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit, wrote Horace: conquered Greece conquered its fierce conqueror. The Romans had won through military might, but were themselves conquered by Greek culture, art and taste. And today, allowing for all the obvious differences, something rather similar is happening with Italy. In a world where, geopolitically speaking, let's face it, we perhaps carry less weight than we would like, we continue to be a benchmark when it comes to food & beverage. And across the entire industry: first and foremost for our products, of course, but also for the machinery, equipment and technologies used to produce, process, package and bring them to tables around the world. When it comes to cappuccino, pizza, pasta or caprese, half the world envies us and the other half tries to imitate us. Sometimes successfully, sometimes, let's admit it, with rather imaginative results. But behind this uniquely Italian ability to turn food into culture, style and something people aspire to lies an enormous industry. A remarkable and thriving network of companies, technologies, research, packaging and automation. The evidence can be found at major Italian and international trade fairs: Cibus Tec in Parma, one of the key showcases for food & beverage technologies; PACK EXPO International in Chicago, at the heart of the North American market; and Gulfood Manufacturing in Dubai, an increasingly important meeting point for the international food manufacturing industry. It is also reflected in the magazine you are reading: an international, English-language issue featuring three special sections dedicated to Cibus Tec, PACK EXPO International and Gulfood Manufacturing. Three exhibitions, three markets, three different showcases, all sharing a significant presence of Italian companies and technologies. Technologies developed here, travelling across borders, bringing innovation to international markets and, above all, proving their worth around the world. Because we may no longer be the Romans who conquered the world. But when it comes to food, we are certainly still conquering it.



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Understanding the workforce challenge in PACKAGING and PROCESSING

LABOUR SHORTAGES CONTINUE TO SHAPE INVESTMENT DECISIONS ACROSS THE PACKAGING AND PROCESSING INDUSTRY, WITH MANUFACTURERS BALANCING RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND AUTOMATION TO MEET GROWING PRODUCTION DEMANDS.



The packaging and processing industry is undergoing a significant workforce transition. While demand for skilled labour continues to grow, manufacturers across multiple sectors are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain qualified employees, particularly for technical and production roles.

According to PMMI's Inside the Workforce Gap report, workforce availability remains one of the industry's most significant operational challenges. The issue affects companies of different sizes and sectors, influencing not only day-to-day production but also long-term investment

strategies and technology adoption. The report highlights that manufacturers are facing shortages across a broad range of positions, from machine operators and maintenance technicians to engineers and automation specialists. As production systems become increasingly digital and interconnected, companies are also looking for employees with a wider mix of mechanical, electrical and digital skills.

The challenge is not limited to recruitment. Retaining experienced workers and transferring knowledge to new employees have become equally important priorities. As skilled personnel retire, manufactur-

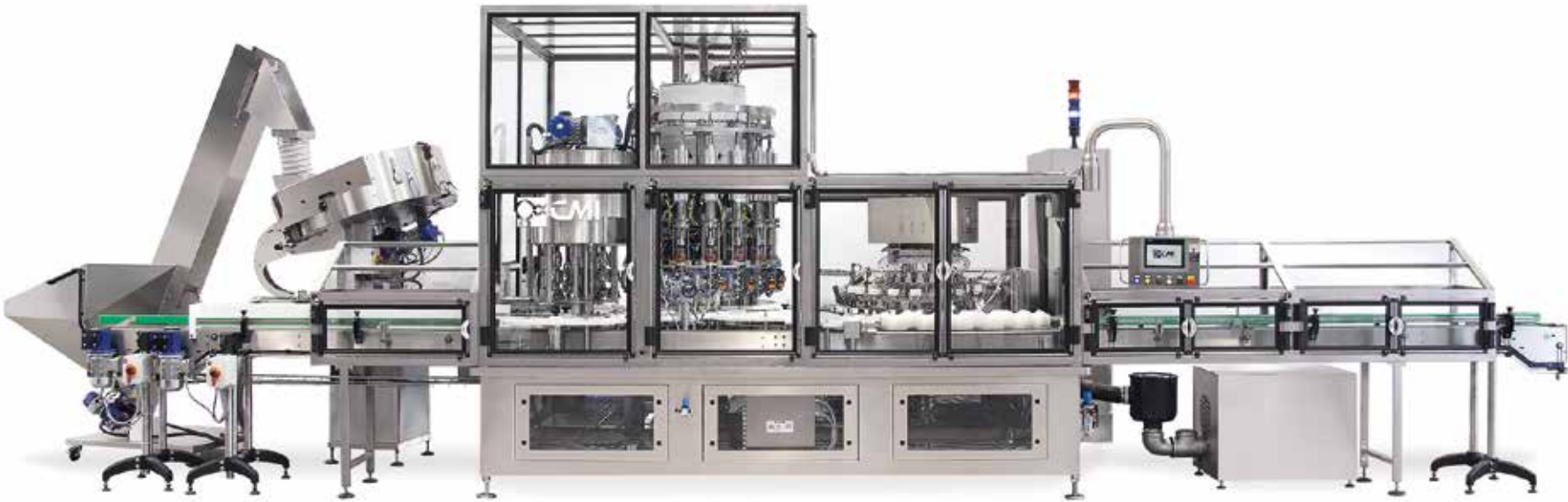
ers risk losing valuable operational expertise, increasing the need for effective training programmes and knowledge-sharing systems.

These workforce dynamics are also influencing investment decisions. Many companies are expanding their use of automation, particularly in repetitive or physically demanding operations such as palletising and inspection. However, the report suggests that automation is generally viewed as a way to support existing staff and maintain productivity rather than simply reduce headcount.

Despite growing interest, implementation remains gradual. End users identify several barriers to wider automation, including capital costs, uncertainty over return on investment, limited factory space and the practical difficulties of upgrading production lines without interrupting operations. Manufacturers managing multiple product formats also require flexible systems capable of adapting to different packaging configurations, adding another layer of complexity to investment decisions. As a result, many companies are adopting a phased approach, introducing new technologies incrementally while continuing to invest in workforce development and employee training.

The report suggests that addressing the workforce gap will require more than a single solution. Recruitment, skills development, knowledge transfer and appropriately targeted automation all play a role in helping manufacturers maintain competitiveness in an increasingly complex production environment.

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& derivates



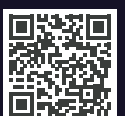
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SMALLER BOTTLES GAIN GROUND AS SPIRITS PRODUCERS RESPOND TO CHANGING CONSUMER DEMAND

GROWING DEMAND FOR SMALLER AND MORE AFFORDABLE BOTTLE FORMATS IS BEGINNING TO RESHAPE PARTS OF THE SPIRITS MARKET. A TREND WORTH WATCHING NOT ONLY FOR BRAND OWNERS AND RETAILERS, BUT ALSO FOR BEVERAGE MACHINERY MANUFACTURERS, AS GREATER FORMAT VARIETY PLACES NEW DEMANDS ON FILLING, HANDLING AND PACKAGING LINES.

Smaller bottle formats are gaining ground in the spirits market as producers look for new ways to respond to weaker purchasing power and changing consumer habits. In the UK, Suntory Global Spirits has expanded its range of reduced-size bottles with the launch of 35 cl versions of Jim Beam Pineapple and Jim Beam Black Cherry. The move follows growing interest in so-called fractional formats, particularly bottles between 20 and 50 cl, which are increasingly being positioned as a more accessible alternative to traditional full-size formats.

According to Nielsen data cited by Drinks Retailing News, sales of smaller formats are growing while demand for conventional bottle sizes is declining. Suntory has already indicated that further launches are planned for 2027, including Jim Beam White and additional flavoured variants. The trend reflects a broader effort by beverage producers to adapt pack sizes and price points to a more cautious consumer environment. Smaller bottles can offer a lower entry price while also responding to demand for greater choice and more flexible consumption occasions.

For the beverage processing and packaging industry, however, the development also has a technological dimension. A wider mix of bottle sizes inevitably increases the importance of production flexibility. Filling and capping systems, conveyors, labelling equipment and secondary packaging lines may increasingly be required to handle a broader range of formats, while keeping changeover times and production losses under control.

This is particularly relevant for producers managing several SKUs on the same line. As portfolios become more fragmented and shorter production runs become more common, machinery capable of rapid format changes and flexible handling can become an increasingly important factor in overall line efficiency. The rise of smaller formats should therefore be watched not simply as a retail or marketing trend. If it continues, it could influence some of the requirements placed on beverage production and packaging equipment, particularly in terms of versatility, automation and changeover management. For machinery manufacturers, this makes changing bottle sizes another useful indicator of how consumer trends can progressively translate into new production requirements.



EUROPE'S BEVERAGE MARKET SHIFTS TOWARDS HEALTHIER, ALCOHOL-FREE CHOICES

BEVERAGE SALES INCREASED BY 2.9% ACROSS EUROPE'S SIX LARGEST GROCERY MARKETS, DRIVEN BY HIGHER SPENDING ON NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS, WHILE SALES OF BEER, WINE AND SPIRITS CONTINUED TO DECLINE. CIRCANA DATA ALSO SHOW GROWING DEMAND FOR LOW- AND NO-ALCOHOL PRODUCTS, SPORTS DRINKS AND OTHER BEVERAGES ASSOCIATED WITH HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES.

The European beverage market continues to evolve as consumers reduce their alcohol consumption and increasingly turn to non-alcoholic and health-oriented alternatives. According to Circana, beverage sales increased by 2.9% last year across France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK, reaching a total value of €180 billion. The trend was largely supported by non-alcoholic beverages, whose sales rose by 5.4% to €109 billion. Low- and no-alcohol alternatives recorded particularly strong growth, up 7.3%, alongside increased spending on sports drinks, energy drinks and yoghurt-based beverages. Alcohol sales, by contrast, declined by 0.8% across the six markets. Beer sales fell by 0.9%, cider by 1.2%, wine by 1.5% and spirits by 2.2%.

According to Circana's consumer research, 43% of shoppers said they were reducing their alcohol intake by purchasing less, postponing purchases or stopping altogether. The percentage rises to around 50% among consumers aged between 25 and 39. At the same time, 44% of respondents said they were buying more bottled water, while 31% reported increasing their purchases of juices and smoothies and 29% were spending more on tea and coffee. Only 15% said they were buying more alcoholic beverages. The decline in alcohol consumption comes despite widespread promotional activity. Around 41% of beer and 37% of alcoholic beverages were sold on promotion during the year, compared with approximately 25% of beverages overall. "Younger people in particular are drinking much less alcohol and there is no evidence this will change as they get older, as the

growing mix of adult soft drinks and lighter alternatives is simply becoming an increasingly normal part of everyday drinking," said Ananda Roy, senior vice president of strategic growth insights at Circana.

According to Roy, alcohol producers will therefore need to look beyond price promotions and develop lighter products with lower sugar, calorie and alcohol content in order to respond to changing consumption habits. Innovation is also contributing to market growth. Circana estimates that new beverage products generated an additional €242 million in sales during the year. Dairy drinks accounted for €161 million of this figure, while low- and no-alcohol products and bottled water generated an additional €32 million each.

Value growth outpaces volumes

Higher spending, however, did not translate into comparable volume growth. While beverage sales increased by 2.9% in value, the amount of products purchased rose by only 0.5%, with average prices increasing by 2.3%. The UK remained the largest of the six markets in value terms, with beverage sales rising by 3.2% to €54 billion. The country accounted for around 30% of total spending but only 19% of volumes sold. Italy recorded a 2.9% increase in spending and the Netherlands a 2% rise, although volumes remained essentially unchanged in both markets. Spain showed a more balanced development, with prices increasing by 2.4% and volumes by 2.6%. In France, growth was mainly volume-driven: quantities sold rose by 3.3%, while average prices increased by just 0.4%. Germany was the only market among the six



to report declining beverage volumes, down 2.7%, while average prices increased by 4%. Some categories continued to expand strongly despite higher prices. Volumes of yoghurt-based drinks increased by 12.3%, ready-to-drink spirits by 12.9%, while still water and plant-based beverages both grew by 5.2%. Market conditions also improved during the second quarter of 2026, when average beverage prices declined by 0.2% and volumes sold increased by 1.6%. Private-label products are also strengthening their position. According to Circana, retailer brands now account for 35% of total beverage spending, gaining share in categories including coffee, wine and champagne, and dairy drinks.

[circana.com](https://www.circana.com)



CARLSBERG EXPANDS PEPSICO PARTNERSHIP ACROSS THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

THE GROUP HAS SIGNED AGREEMENTS TO ACQUIRE PEPSICO BOTTLING BUSINESSES IN GEORGIA AND ARMENIA, FOLLOWING ITS RECENT EXPANSION INTO AZERBAIJAN. THE MOVE WILL CREATE A REGIONAL CLUSTER AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BROADER MULTI-BEVERAGE PORTFOLIO.



Carlsberg Group is strengthening its presence in the South Caucasus through an expansion of its strategic partnership with PepsiCo. The company has signed agreements to become PepsiCo's bottling partner in Georgia and Armenia, following a similar agreement recently announced in Azerbaijan. The transactions involve the acquisition of Iberia Refreshments in Georgia and JI Pepsi Cola Bottler Armenia, both currently owned by Revery and operating as PepsiCo bottlers in their respective markets. Following completion, Carlsberg will assume responsibility for the production, sale and distribution of PepsiCo's soft drinks portfolio in the two countries. The acquisition of the Armenian business remains subject to regulatory approval from the Government of Arme-

nia. Once the transactions are completed, Georgia and Armenia will become Carlsberg Group operating markets. The expansion follows the agreement announced approximately two months earlier in Azerbaijan, where Carlsberg is scheduled to become PepsiCo's bottling partner from 2027. Together, the three countries will form a South Caucasus cluster, building on Carlsberg's established business in Azerbaijan and providing a regional platform for further development of its beverage portfolio. The move is part of Carlsberg's broader strategy to strengthen its position beyond beer, combining its brewing activities with a wider range of soft drinks and other beverage categories. The partnership with PepsiCo already extends across several international markets. Earlier in 2026, Carlsberg announced agreements covering

Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which will take effect from 2029. With the latest additions, the collaboration will cover 17 markets, including the United Kingdom, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and several Asian countries. "We're excited about the expansion of our long-standing partnership with PepsiCo to Georgia and Armenia," said Nikos Kalaitzidakis, Executive Vice President, Central and Eastern Europe & India, Carlsberg Group. "The expanded business will provide a strong platform to further develop a full multi-beverage portfolio across the region."

For PepsiCo, the agreements will provide access to Carlsberg's local operational and commercial capabilities, supporting the distribution and development of its soft drinks portfolio in the two markets. According to Natalia Filippocianis, SVP and GM, International Beverages Europe at PepsiCo, the expanded collaboration will strengthen the company's route to market in Georgia and Armenia and support its longer-term growth strategy. From an industrial perspective, the expansion is another example of the growing importance of partnerships between brewers and soft drink producers. By extending their activities across different beverage categories, companies can develop broader manufacturing and distribution operations, although Carlsberg has not announced specific new production investments in Georgia or Armenia as part of these agreements.

carlsberggroup.com

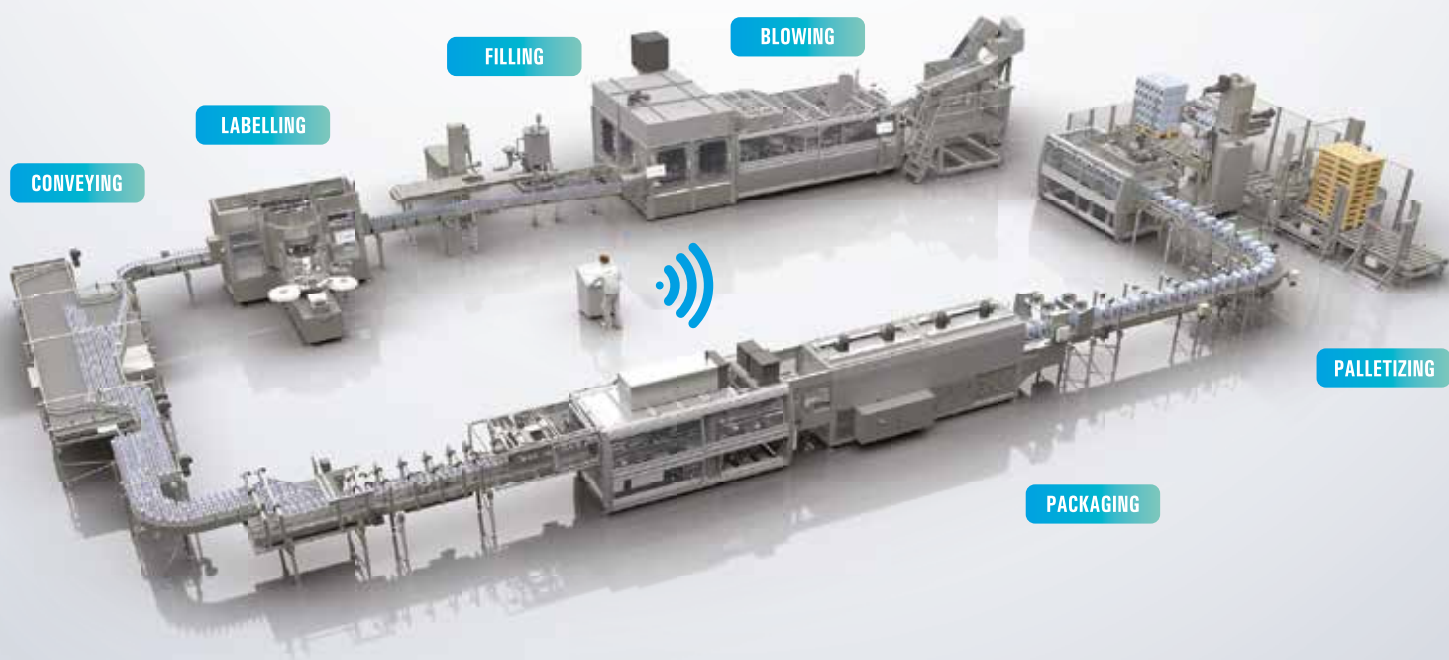
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Three Cs for **REEPACK**: Competence, Consistency and Customisation

AT CIBUS TEC, REEPACK WILL SHOWCASE TWO SOLUTIONS REFLECTING ITS INCREASINGLY BROAD PORTFOLIO, FROM ENTRY-LEVEL MACHINES TO INTEGRATED PACKAGING LINES, WITH A GROWING FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY, FLEXIBILITY AND CUSTOMISATION.

Over the past 25 years, the food packaging industry has undergone several major transformations. Materials have evolved, automation requirements have increased, and product shelf life and safety have become ever more important. In recent years, sustainability and efficiency have also become essential considerations in virtually every new project. Production requirements have changed too, with manufacturers demanding greater flexibility, higher speeds and the ability to handle different formats while responding to the varying needs of international markets.

Reepack has developed alongside





these changes. Founded more than 25 years ago by Livio Valli, the company, based in Seriate, Italy, initially established its expertise in tray sealing and thermoforming before gradually expanding its technologies, applications and system integration capabilities. Today, its portfolio covers four main product families: vacuum packaging machines, tray sealers, thermoformers and flow wrappers. These range from compact, semi-automatic equipment to complete, customised packaging lines. This expansion has involved much more than simply adding new models to the catalogue. The complexity of the projects undertaken has also increased significantly, with individual machines increasingly complemented by integrated systems, additional equipment, automation and solutions developed around specific customer requirements. This ability to combine different technologies and adapt them

to a wide variety of products, materials and production volumes has become a defining feature of Reepack's approach. Its expertise now extends from solid sealing to modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) and vacuum skin packaging (VSP).

The company itself has also grown. Reepack currently employs more than 75 people directly and operates a facility of approximately 6,000 square meters in Seriate, housing production, showroom and demonstration areas. Since 2022, it has been part of the US-based ProMach group, a development that has opened up new opportunities in terms of organisation, investment and international cooperation while preserving, according to the company, the manufacturing and engineering identity established in Italy.

Against this background, Reepack is preparing for Cibus Tec 2026, an opportunity not only to present its packag-

ing technologies but also to strengthen its position in the Italian market, where the company believes there is still considerable room for growth.

Cibus Tec: strengthening ties with the Italian market

For Reepack, Cibus Tec will primarily be an opportunity to engage more closely with Italian customers and end users. The company sees further potential to increase brand awareness and develop direct relationships within its domestic market.

In Parma, Reepack will present two very different technologies, illustrating the breadth of a portfolio that has expanded considerably over the years. At one end is a compact solution designed for manufacturers taking their first steps into thermoforming; at the other, a high-performance tray sealer developed for larger, more demanding production environments.

The first is the "ReeForm ONE", previously unveiled at Interpack but making its debut on the Italian market. This entry-level thermoforming machine is designed for small and medium-scale production, particularly in fresh and frozen food applications. With a compact footprint and a maximum length of 3.5 meters, it can operate at up to 10 cycles per minute, handling both

ReeForm ONE: compact thermoforming

Designed for small and medium-scale production, ReeForm ONE is Reepack's entry-level thermoforming machine for fresh and frozen food applications. With a maximum length of 3.5 metres and an all-stainless-steel construction, the machine can operate at up to 10 cycles per minute. It supports vacuum and modified atmosphere packaging and is controlled by a PLC with a 7-inch touchscreen.



vacuum and modified atmosphere packaging. The machine features an all-stainless-steel construction and is controlled by a PLC with a 7-inch touchscreen.

Alongside it will be the "ReeMaster 700 NextGen", an automatic tray sealer developed for medium and large-scale production and high-capacity packaging lines. Designed for continuous operation, including three-shift production, the machine incorporates servo-driven movements, semi-automatic die-set changeover system and an open-frame design that facilitates cleaning, maintenance and access to components. It supports solid sealing, MAP and skin packaging, and can be integrated with inspection,

weighing, labelling and other upstream or downstream equipment. At Cibus Tec, the "ReeMaster 700 NextGen" will be connected to an automatic infeed conveyor, demonstrating its integration capabilities within a complete packaging line. Product feeding, handling and packaging thus become stages of a single coordinated process, an area in which Reepack has developed considerable engineering expertise. Standardised machines remain an important part of the company's portfolio. However, integrated projects place greater emphasis on customisation, application expertise and the ability to adapt each line to the customer's specific production requirements.

ReeMaster 700 NextGen: high capacity and integration

ReeMaster 700 NextGen is an automatic tray sealer developed for medium and large-scale production, with continuous operation possible across three shifts. It features servo-driven indexing conveyors and servo-controlled side grippers, while too-free semi-automatic die-set changeover system are designed to minimize downtime. The machine supports conventional sealing, MAP and skin packaging and can be integrated with weighing, inspection and labelling systems.

"Integrated projects are where we can make the most of our expertise, because the value no longer lies solely in the individual machine, but in our ability to develop a solution that fits the customer's production process," explains Davide Pizzocaro, Area Sales Manager at Reepack. "This level of integration and customisation is where we can deliver genuine added value."

Reepack's participation in Cibus Tec will also be significant from a group perspective. For the first time in Italy, the company will exhibit alongside other European ProMach brands, highlighting the complementary technologies and potential for integration between the various areas of expertise within the group. "Being part of ProMach enables us to offer customers access to a broader range of expertise, while fully preserving Reepack's identity, know-how and operational independence," explains Federica Morelli, the company's Marketing Manager. "The strength of the group lies precisely in its ability to bring different specialisations together and, where a project requires it, develop more comprehensive and sophisticated

ReeEco: electric technology for lower energy consumption and maintenance

ReeEco is Reepack's fully electric tray sealer. It requires no compressed air, air compressors or water-cooling systems, helping reduce energy consumption, operating costs and maintenance requirements. Available in Gas Flush, MAP and Skin configurations, it can achieve an output of up to 40 packs per minute.

solutions.”

From individual machines to complete lines

Reepack's offering is increasingly moving beyond individual machines towards complete packaging lines. Automation, product handling and packaging are developed as interconnected stages of the same process, with customisation becoming more important as project complexity increases.

For these projects, the engineering team works from the customer's production requirements, addressing line layout, feeding systems, equipment, performance specifications and integration with other equipment.

The approach to machine design has also evolved. In recent years, Reepack has increased its use of electric and servo-driven systems, reducing its reliance on pneumatics wherever possible. This helps improve energy efficiency while also reducing maintenance requirements. Pneumatic systems remain effective in certain applications, particularly cutting and sealing operations on higher-end machines, but ad-

vances in servo technology have gradually expanded the range of functions that can be performed electrically.

A practical example is “ReeEco”, a fully electric tray sealer that requires neither compressed air nor air compressors or water-cooling systems. The machine reflects the direction of Reepack's development strategy, combining greater process control with lower energy consumption, reduced maintenance requirements and simpler operation.

Efficiency and sustainability

Energy efficiency is closely linked to the broader issue of sustainability. For Reepack, this means addressing both machine performance and the ability of its equipment to accommodate changes in packaging materials and formats. “This has become an increasingly important part of our development work in recent years,” explains Davide Pizzocaro. “On the one hand, we have energy consumption and machine efficiency; on the other, packaging materials are evolving rapidly, and the technologies used to process them need to keep pace.”

Customisation remains central to Reepack's approach. This is not simply a question of offering an extensive product range, but of adapting individual machines and complete lines to the production process, the product being packaged and the required level of automation.

“Competence, consistency and customisation,” says Pizzocaro, summarizing the company in three words. Together, these three concepts reflect Reepack's development over the past 25 years, from individual packaging machines to increasingly integrated and customised systems.

Joining ProMach has created further opportunities for investment, organisational development and cooperation with other companies within the group, without changing Reepack's operational independence. Manufacturing, engineering and technical know-how remain in Italy, as do decisions concerning technology development and customer relationships.

“Being part of ProMach gives us greater opportunities for collaboration and integration, while preserving the characteristics that have shaped Reepack's identity,” concludes Federica Morelli. “The strength of the Reepack brand remains rooted in the expertise we have developed in-house, our engineering and manufacturing capabilities, and our ability to work directly with customers through a specialised, hands-on approach.”

reepack.com



ILIP: fresh food packaging moves towards a closed loop

FRESH FOOD PACKAGING IS EVOLVING ALONGSIDE THE NEEDS OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY. AHEAD OF CIBUS TEC 2026, WE TALK TO GIOVANNI DONINI, ILIP'S BUSINESS MANAGER FOODSERVICE PACKAGING & FRESH FOOD PACKAGING, ABOUT PERFORMANCE, ECO-DESIGN, R-PET AND THE "TRAY TO TRAY" MODEL.

Sixty years in packaging means having witnessed changes in materials, technologies, production requirements and, particularly in recent years, the very way packaging is designed. The ILPA Group's roots date back to 1962, when Plastimec was founded in Savignano sul Panaro; ten years later, ILIP was established at the Bazzano plant, now part of the municipality of Valsamoggia. Since then, the business has grown to serve more than 4,000 B2B customers in over

58 countries.

Meanwhile, the market has also changed profoundly. Food packaging must do more than contain and protect a product: it must ensure shelf life, safety and consistent performance on packaging lines, while reducing raw material use and giving greater consideration to the packaging's end of life at the design stage.

This is the context in which ILIP operates today, across Food Service Packaging, Fresh Produce Packaging and Fresh Food Packag-



Giovanni Donini, Ilip SRL



ing. The latter is one of the areas receiving particular attention from the company, with a range of fresh food trays developed according to eco-design principles to combine performance, material reduction and recyclability.

We discussed this evolution, the solutions ILIP will bring to Cibus Tec 2026 and the outlook for Fresh Food Packaging with Giovanni Donini, ILIP's Business Manager Foodservice Packaging & Fresh Food Packaging, starting with the division's current role within the company's offering.

Fresh Food Packaging is one of the areas in which ILIP is investing most heavily. What role does it currently play in your offering, and which solutions will you present at Cibus Tec 2026?

"Fresh Food Packaging," explains Giovanni Donini, "is an important segment for us, with promising

growth prospects, because it addresses some of the needs driving the fastest changes in food packaging: product preservation, line efficiency, reduced raw material use and a growing focus on packaging recyclability. "Our offering stems from the need to bring these aspects together. At Cibus Tec, we will primarily showcase solutions for packaging fresh foods: meat, fish, cheese, fresh-cut produce, fresh pasta and, more generally, perishable products requiring specific levels of protection and shelf life.

"The range includes heat-sealable trays, intended particularly for modified atmosphere packaging, and solutions for stretch-film packaging. We work with different structures and materials, from mono-material R-PET with a high recycled content to multi-layer PET/PE solutions, as well as the option of using compostable bioplastics for specific applications.

"For us, however, the aim is not simply to offer more catalogue options. We want to identify the most suitable solution for the food, the packaging process, the line's characteristics and the customer's objectives, including sustainability goals. Cibus Tec will therefore be an important opportunity to present this approach and engage directly with a food industry demanding ever higher packaging performance alongside more efficient use of resources."

A fresh food tray has to meet very specific technical requirements. Which performance characteristics are most in demand today?

"The first requirement is, of course, product protection, and therefore the packaging's ability to help deliver the intended shelf life. Requirements vary considerably depending on the food, the packaging system and distribution, but the principle is always the same: the tray must maintain consistent performance throughout the product's life cycle.

"Line efficiency is another key consideration. Today's equipment operates at high speeds, and packaging must ensure consistency, mechanical strength, dimensional accuracy and, for heat-sealable trays, reliable and repeatable sealing. In some ap-

Based in Valsamoggia, in the province of Bologna, ILIP is part of the ILPA Group, which processes plastics and bioplastics and serves more than 4,000 B2B customers in over 58 countries. ILIP's operations span three main areas: Food Service Packaging, Fresh Produce Packaging and Fresh Food Packaging.

A distinctive feature of the Group is the vertical integration of the R-PET supply chain. Through AMP Recycling, the ILPA Group has the capacity to recycle around 60,000 tonnes of post-consumer PET per year, sourced from both bottles and trays, as well as other food packaging. This infrastructure also underpins the T2T R-PET "Tray to Tray" model, developed to return PET recovered from trays and punnets to the production of new packaging intended for food contact.

plications, such as meat, managing exudate also comes into play and requires specific container characteristics.

"The market therefore asks us for products that combine high performance, process stability and a lower environmental impact. This is precisely where design becomes crucial: reducing a tray's weight or increasing its recycled content only makes sense if the product continues to work correctly on the line and provide the required preservation. Sustainability cannot be separated from performance."

Performance and sustainability must therefore coexist in the same product. How do you approach eco-design and material selection?

"For us, eco-design begins with design, rather than with the material considered in isolation. The aim is to use only as much material as is strictly necessary, while maintaining the performance packaging must deliver during packing, distribution and food storage.

"This means working on tray weight, geometry, structure and the choice of the most suitable material for the application. In Fresh Food Packaging, we use mono-material R-PET solutions with high percentages of post-consumer recycled content, PET/PE structures where specific sealing properties are required and, for particular applications, we can also work with compostable bioplastics.

"There is therefore no single solution that works in every case. The choice must take into account the product being packaged, the technology used on the line, the required shelf life and

the packaging's end of life.

"I believe this is one of the most important considerations in discussions of food packaging sustainability today: reducing material use and increasing recycled content are fundamental objectives, but they must be achieved without compromising the packaging's primary function. If packaging fails to protect the food properly or creates inefficiencies on the line, the environmental benefit may be lost. That is why we always seek a balance between impact reduction, performance and safety."

The T2T R-PET "Tray to Tray" project brings the circular economy directly into the food packaging supply chain. How does it work, and what advantage does controlling the recycling stage give you?

"For us," explains Giovanni Donini, "circularity is a very practical matter, because within the Group we can control a significant part of the post-consumer PET supply chain. We have a recycling capacity of around 60,000 tonnes per year, which allows us to work not only with material from bottles, but also from PET trays and punnets.

"The T2T R-PET project stems from this capability: recovering a post-consumer tray and turning it back into raw material suitable for producing another tray intended for food contact. This is what 'Tray to Tray' means: closing the material loop while keeping it within the same application.

"We have been working on this process for several years and continue to refine it, both in terms of material quality and by progressively increasing the share of tray-derived PET we

can reintroduce into production.

"Overseeing the recycling stage offers two advantages. On the one hand, we have greater control over the quality and origin of the secondary raw material; on the other, we can design packaging with its potential return to the production cycle already in mind.

"I believe this is one of the fundamental steps towards making PET packaging truly circular. Recycling bottles is not enough: efficient supply chains must also be created for trays and other food packaging. Our goal is to demonstrate that a tray can become a tray again, while retaining the properties required for a new use in food packaging."

Looking ahead, what do you see as the main directions for Fresh Food Packaging development, and which priorities is ILIP working on?

"I believe the market will continue to move in some very clear directions: a greater focus on sustainability, increased use of recycled material, weight reduction and, at the same time, demand for ever higher and more consistent performance.

"The key will be to bring these elements together. In food packaging, we cannot think solely in terms of reducing raw material use: we must continue to ensure safety, shelf life, reliability on the line and packaging quality. The real challenge will therefore be to develop solutions that are increasingly efficient from an environmental perspective without losing performance.

"For ILIP, this means continuing to invest in materials research, eco-design and improvements to recycling processes, further strengthening the Tray to Tray model. At the same time, we will continue to work on product optimisation, because even a few grams saved on a tray, multiplied across substantial industrial volumes, can translate into a significant reduction in overall material use.



"We have in-house research and development expertise and are directly involved in product design, including mould design. This allows us to address several variables and respond more quickly to a rapidly changing market, also driven by European legislation.

"Our priority," Donini concludes, "will therefore remain to support this evolution with solutions that are sustainable in industrial practice, not only environmentally, but also in terms of efficiency, costs and continuity of production for the customer."

Ultimately, the direction is clear: asking packaging to do more while using fewer resources. Protecting the product better, running consistently on increasingly high-performance lines, reducing weight,

increasing recycled content and designing with what happens after use already in mind.

For ILIP, Fresh Food Packaging depends on precisely this balance, in which sustainability and performance can no longer be considered two parallel paths. They must become part of the same industrial project.

Cibus Tec will therefore also be an important test of how ready the market is to take this evolution further. Today, the future of the tray is measured not only in grams or microns, but in its ability to remain efficient throughout the supply chain and, wherever possible, to become raw material for a new cycle.

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BAUMER: uncompromising technology for food processing

IN FOOD & BEVERAGE, SENSOR TECHNOLOGY PLAYS A DECISIVE ROLE IN SAFEGUARDING FOOD SAFETY AND ENABLING MORE EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES. BAUMER AIMS TO STRENGTHEN ITS PRESENCE IN THE SECTOR THROUGH INNOVATION, RELIABILITY AND BUILD QUALITY. AS NICOLA MIGLIORANZA, KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER FOOD & BEVERAGE – PACKAGING MACHINES MANUFACTURERS AT BAUMER ITALIA, EXPLAINS, THESE QUALITIES DEFINE THE NEW PRODUCTS BEING PRESENTED AT THE TRADE FAIR.

The Baumer Group develops and manufactures sensors, encoders, measuring instruments and components for automated image processing. With an international presence encompassing around 2,800 employees, 39 subsidiaries and operations in 19 countries, it will be among the exhibitors at Cibus Tec, where Baumer Italia will be joined by Baumer HHS, the Group company specialising in high-performance hot-melt and cold-glue application systems. This provided an opportunity to ask Nicola Miglioranza, Key Account Manager Food & Beverage – Packaging Machines Manufacturers at Baumer Italia, for an overview of the company's approach to the Food & Beverage industry.

What are Baumer's main areas of expertise, and what role does the Food & Beverage sector currently play in the company's activities?

Baumer is a Swiss family-owned company founded in 1952. Over time, it has grown into an international player, partly through targeted acquisitions. After establishing a leading position in photoelectric sensors for the printing industry, the company has gradually diversified over the past thirty years, entering new application sectors. Among these, Food & Beverage has become increasingly important.

Today, it offers a comprehensive portfolio covering the main areas of industrial automation and stands out in the market for its commitment to develop-



Nicola Miglioranza, Baumer

perature, flow rate, conductivity, level and pressure. Baumer continues to expand this offering to meet food production lines' requirements for control, safety and efficiency.

In Food & Beverage, do you mainly serve manufacturers of processing machinery, packaging machinery, or both?

Growth through acquisitions has led to different market positions in the countries where Baumer operates. In France, for example, the company has developed a stronger presence among end users; in Italy and Germany, its main market consists of machinery and plant manufacturers. In the Italian market, Baumer has a particularly well-established presence in packaging and Food & Beverage technologies. The company also operates in other sectors, including heavy vehicles such as

ing compact and ultra-compact products without sacrificing precision, reliability or performance.

In Food & Beverage, its technologies are used at key stages of the process to monitor parameters such as tem-



Baumer Hygienic Connection

BHC Baumer Hygienic Coplanar – flush process connection



The display helps operators reliably identify the various process stages, ensuring food safety and preventing misinterpretation

truck-mounted cranes, excavators and aerial work platforms. For the 2027–2028 fiscal year, however, it has chosen to focus its activities further on the first two sectors, which are strategic for the Italian automation market.

What are the most important needs of the food industry that your technologies seek to address today?

In Food & Beverage, a sensor must integrate into the machine's ecosystem and operate directly within the food production process. As a result, all the sector's requirements converge on one priority: ensuring food safety. Any problem that reaches the consumer affects not only food quality but can also undermine trust in the producer and the value of the brand. Sensor technology must therefore measure process parameters accurately without introducing any risk of contamination.

This requirement has become even more important as the fresh food supply chain has evolved. Today, even particularly sensitive products must retain their quality, sensory characteristics and safety for longer periods and throughout an increasingly complex supply chain. This requires control of processing and packaging conditions, preservation of the cold chain during transport and, where the product requires it, packaging that also protects against light and UV radiation.

Consumer behaviour has also changed. Consumers read labels more carefully, use smartphones to learn more about the origin and characteristics of foods, and seek assurances of freshness. The challenge is to extend shelf life and reduce waste without compromising quality or wholesomeness. For machinery manufacturers, this means designing equipment capable of handling even sensitive foods, such as sliced meat packed in trays, while meeting the highest hygiene standards. In industrial automation, sensors detect an object's

presence or position without coming into contact with the product. In food processing, by contrast, the sensor is constantly in contact with the food being processed. The challenge is to ensure that it does not interfere with the process or become a potential source of contamination.

On a technical level, Baumer addresses this by using materials suited to hygienic applications, such as high-grade stainless steels and high-performance polymers such as PEEK, chosen for their inertness towards the product and their resistance to chemical, thermal and mechanical stresses. Geometry is also carefully considered: completely smooth surfaces, rounded and tapered shapes, the absence of gaps and one-piece construction reduce the risk of residue build-up and prevent parts, however small, from becoming detached during processing. Sensors must also withstand automated cleaning and sanitisation cycles involving high-temperature water, detergents and pressurised jets, as well as steam sterilisation treatments at very high temperatures where these are part of the plant's procedures. This represents a significant technological challenge, because measurement precision, durability, cleanability and safety must all be ensured simultaneously.

Which new products and solutions will you present at Cibus Tec 2026?

At Cibus Tec, Baumer will first and foremost present the PAC50, a compact conductivity sensor developed for hygienic applications. The product combines the food safety features already discussed: one-piece design, PEEK process-contact parts, compliance with 3-A, FDA and EHEDG standards, and resistance to CIP and SIP cleaning cycles. These are complemented by 2% measurement accuracy and particularly short response times, which are essential for rapidly identifying and distinguishing fluids at different stages

of the process.

A distinctive feature of Baumer's offering is its integrated touchscreen display, which is fully configurable and designed to withstand washdown. Equipping the sensor with a local interface entails an additional cost, but reflects a clear conviction within the company: sensors should not be "blind". Operators must be able to check the plant's operating conditions at any time, directly at the machine, without having to go to a PC.

The display does more than show the measured value. Its backlight can change colour according to the process status, while any anomalies are also indicated through text messages. This makes the information easier to interpret and helps even less experienced operators identify abnormal conditions promptly. Parameter setting and calibration can also be carried out directly via the touchscreen.

Baumer will also showcase its BHC process connection again. It complies with the most stringent international requirements applicable to the sector and is designed to sit completely flush with the inner wall of the pipe or tank. The surface in contact with the fluid therefore remains free of protrusions, cavities or areas where residues could accumulate. This is particularly important in hygienic applications, as it facilitates cleaning and reduces the risk of contamination. Food & Beverage operators that have adopted it include Granarolo



PAC50 ultra-fast conductivity sensor

and Tetra Pak.

What role are intelligent sensors, connectivity and digitalisation playing in improving the efficiency and safety of food processes?

Machinery manufacturers are no longer looking solely for sensors that provide basic information, such as on or off. They want intelligent devices that, alongside process data, provide information about their own status and operating conditions, allowing anomalies to be identified and situations that could lead to a fault or production stoppage to be recognised in advance. For Baumer, another key advantage is the ability to set sensor parameters remotely. In Food & Beverage, recipes can change, as can product characteristics such as density, consistency or conductivity. In the past, adapting a sensor to a new process required a technician to work directly on the machine. Today, the customer's control system can reprogramme the device and automatically initiate the new setup. Connectivity also allows the machine manufacturer to connect remotely, check how the sensor is operating and adjust its parameters. This is a very practical advantage: it makes it possible to diagnose a problem without necessarily sending a technician to the plant, even when the machine is thousands of kilometres away. This reduces downtime, service costs and the complexity of interventions.

All this information is managed through the Baumer Sensor Suite, a software dashboard that allows the sensors on a machine to be connected and monitored, including compatible devices from other manufacturers. End users can also check sensor operation, modify parameters and see whether a threshold is approaching its limit, for example because of a gradual build-up of residues on the sensor.

Looking ahead, what are your expectations for the coming months, and which innovations will Baumer focus on?

Baumer will continue to invest in Food & Beverage, a sector for which it has dedicated manufacturing facilities and a Competence Center in Denmark. Its location reflects the longstanding



P50 Series

relationship and expertise developed alongside Tetra Pak. The strategy focuses on increasing technological specialisation, pursued through both in-house development and targeted acquisitions, with the aim of completing the portfolio and integrating distinctive solutions. One example is the PAD20, an analysis sensor designed to detect air and gas bubbles in process fluids. This capability enables more detailed monitoring of the product inside pipes and the identification of conditions that could compromise its quality or contribute to contamination.

A second priority is conductivity measurement. Baumer is working on further developing the PAC50, designed to identify the fluid in a pipe extremely quickly. In dairy plants, for example,

conductivity makes it possible to distinguish milk from water and the chemical solutions used in cleaning cycles carried out several times a day. In these processes, response speed is crucial: even a delay of a few seconds in identifying the transition from one fluid to another can, depending on the flow rate, result in several litres of product having to be discarded. A particularly fast sensor, by contrast, allows the different process stages to be separated more precisely, reducing product losses and consumption of water and detergents. For end users, the benefit is twofold: greater process safety and a substantial reduction in operating costs, including those associated with water consumption and disposal.

[baumer.com](https://www.baumer.com)

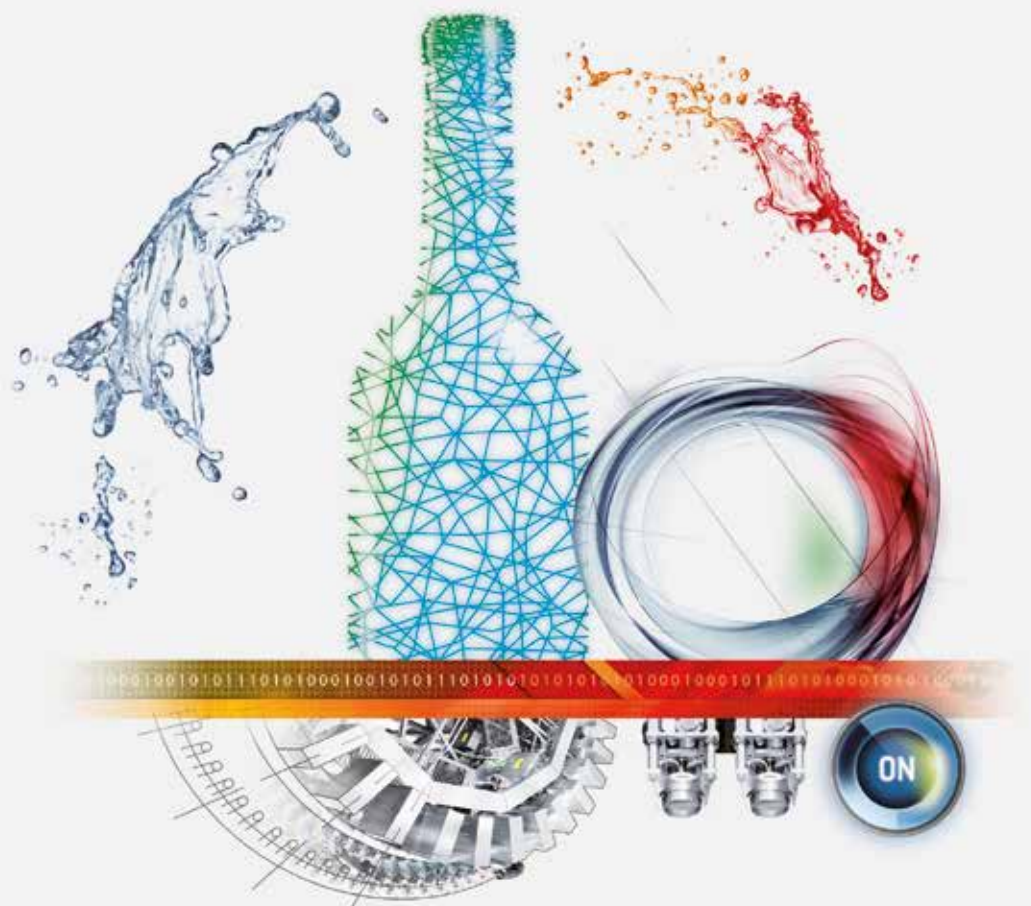
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STALAM: radio frequency technology opens up new frontiers in food processing

FROM RAPID DEFROSTING TO PASTEURISATION, FROM SANITISATION TO POST-OVEN DRYING: STALAM BRINGS A TECHNOLOGY TO THE FOOD INDUSTRY THAT GENERATES HEAT DIRECTLY WITHIN THE PRODUCT, REDUCING PROCESSING TIMES AND ENERGY CONSUMPTION. WE SPEAK TO ENRICO ZANETTI, MANAGING DIRECTOR, ABOUT THE GROUP'S GROWTH, THE INNOVATION HUB AND THE NEW MEATFLOW+ AND SOLIDWAVE SOLUTIONS, WHICH WILL ALSO TAKE CENTRE STAGE IN PARMA (ITALY) AT CIBUS TEC 2026.

Founded in 1978 and having grown by developing radio-frequency applications for various industrial sectors, Stalam S.p.A. has progressively strengthened its presence in the food sector, where it now offers technologies for numerous thermal processes. This specialisation has been accompanied by investment in research and development and by growth that, by 2025, had taken the Group's consolidated turnover to €26.9 million. We spoke about this with Enrico Zanetti, Managing Director of Stalam.

Where did Stalam originate and how has it evolved to become the Group it is today?

Stalam was founded in 1978 with a strong specialisation in radio-frequency technology, initially applied mainly to the textile sector. Over the years, we have gradually expanded its applications to other industrial sectors and, in particular, to the food industry.

In the food sector, radio frequency can be used in various processes: from rapid defrosting to pasteurisation, from pest control and sanitisation of low-moisture agricultural produce to post-oven drying in the bakery sector. The key feature of this technology is that heating takes place directly within the product. Unlike conventional thermal systems, in which heat must be transferred from the surface inwards, radio frequency enables rapid and uniform volumetric heating.



Alongside these applications, the company has also grown and has now become a small industrial group. We acquired a specialist metalworking manufacturer in the 1990s, set up a joint venture in China in the early 2000s and, more recently, acquired RF Systems – a move that enables us to complement Stalam's expertise in radio frequency with that in microwaves and solid-state generators.

Today, the Group employs a total of around 120 people and operates across five continents, exporting around 100 machines each year and boasting an installed base of approximately 4,000 units. In 2025, we achieved consolidated turnover of

26.9 million euros, up 16.4 per cent on the previous year.

What is the principle behind radio-frequency technology and what advantages does it offer the food industry?

Our mission is to develop innovative, efficient and reliable machines based on radio frequency technology. The principle that sets this technology apart is precisely the way in which heat is generated: we do not heat the product from the outside, but directly from within.

The energy is therefore transferred to the product quickly and evenly, without the need for heat carriers such as

steam or hot air. This helps to reduce processing times and avoid some of the typical problems associated with conventional heat transfer, such as surface overheating or uneven temperature distribution. Another important aspect concerns energy efficiency. This is an electrothermal technology powered exclusively by electricity and can therefore be integrated with energy from renewable sources. The reduction in processing times and the generation of heat directly within the product also help to minimise energy consumption and the process's carbon footprint. These characteristics perfectly meet the needs of the modern food industry, which is increasingly focused not only on productivity and quality but also on sustainability.

What role does research play in the development of these applications?

Research and development is fundamental to the Stalam Group. In 2025, we further strengthened this activity by inaugurating the new Innovation Hub at our headquarters in Nove (VI) – a space of over 800 square metres dedicated specifically to research, development, application testing and customer demonstrations. It is not simply a showroom. It is a fully-fledged technical and technological laboratory where we have pilot lines and machines and can develop new processes alongside our customers. Here, engineers, food technologists, industrial partners and research institutes can work side by side, carry out product trials and practically verify the applicability of radio frequency to a specific process. This is important because the development of a new machine often starts precisely with the product and the custom-



er's needs. At the Innovation Hub, we can study the process, test it, collect data and gradually arrive at an industrial solution. At the centre, we are currently working on, amongst other things, defrosting, pasteurisation, drying, sanitisation, solid-state generators and new thermal processes for meat, liquid egg and baked goods.

What are the main applications of radio frequency in the food sector today?

One of the long-standing applications is the post-oven treatment of baked goods. Radio frequency enables the uniform removal of residual moisture from products such as biscuits, crackers and other baked goods, by intervening in the final stage of the process and contributing to the product's quality and shelf life. Another well-established area is the rapid defrosting of meat, fish, vegetables and other frozen raw materials. We have been manufacturing this technology for around fifteen years, and it is used primarily in medium and large-scale food processing. Radio frequency enables the product to be brought rapidly and uniformly to the

desired temperature, speeding up a stage that can take much longer with conventional systems.

Then there are pasteurisation and sanitisation, which open up particularly interesting prospects for agricultural raw materials.

How can radio frequency contribute to the safety of seeds, cereals and other raw materials?

Consider products such as cereals, seeds, pulses, chia, sesame or quinoa. Many of these raw materials come from distant countries and, before reaching European processing plants, must be handled correctly to prevent contamination, infestation or the growth of mould, which in turn produces the notorious aflatoxins. Our technologies enable heat treatments to be carried out directly in the countries of production, so that the raw materials can reach their destination markets already treated, wholesome and safe. One of the most interesting aspects is that physical treatment using radio frequency is a viable alternative to the use of plant protection products and chemicals. This makes the technology suitable for use in organic production and, more generally, for companies seeking processes that rely less on chemicals.

Among the new developments is MEATFLOW+. What production need does this solution address?

MEATFLOW+ was developed for the rapid and continuous treatment of pumpable products. It is a radio-frequency tube heater designed to quickly and uniformly bring semi-finished products made from minced meat, emulsions, suspensions and other fluid products up to the desired





temperature, even when they contain chunks or cubes.

Consider, for example, emulsions used in the production of cured meats and other meat-based products, as well as soups, sauces, protein alternatives and pet food. The mixture passes through the system and heating takes place directly within the product itself: the required temperature increase can therefore be achieved in a matter of seconds, with precise control of the process.

This makes it possible to increase production speed, reduce processing times and avoid areas that are overheated or, conversely, insufficiently heated. The machine is also compact and can be integrated into automated production lines.

MEATFLOW+ was unveiled at the IF-FA trade fair and we are now moving forward with its industrialisation. It is a technology that is generating considerable interest in international markets, particularly in Europe and North America.

Another area of development concerns solid-state radio-frequency generators. What does SOLIDWAVE bring to the table?

It is one of the innovations in which we are investing the most. With SOLIDWAVE, we are introducing a radio-frequency solution based on a solid-state generator as an alternative to the tradi-

tional triode-oscillating circuit combination, which currently characterises all large-scale radio-frequency machinery. This technological advancement now enables us to develop user-friendly and competitive machines even for relatively small production capacities. Historically, our defrosting solutions were primarily aimed at medium and large-scale industry. Thanks to the new technologies and expertise brought into the Group by RF Systems, we can now also cater to businesses with more modest production requirements, such as catering firms and food processing businesses operating on a

scale little larger than artisanal.

We have recently completed and tested the industrial pre-series of a batch radio-frequency defrosting machine with a solid-state generator and a capacity of 150 kg/h, and we will be launching it at Cibus Tec.

Will Cibus Tec 2026 therefore be an important opportunity to showcase this development?

Certainly. Cibus Tec is a strategic event for us, as it allows us to engage directly with the food industry and demonstrate just how diverse the applications of radio frequency have become. In Parma, we will be showcasing all our solutions dedicated to thermal processes for the food industry, from rapid defrosting to pasteurisation, from pest control and sanitisation of raw materials to the new technologies developed in recent years.

It will also be an opportunity to present, in particular, SOLIDWAVE and MEATFLOW+, and to outline the evolution of the Group and our research activities. The aim is to continue expanding our range with technologies compatible with the needs of modern industry: faster and more controllable processes, high product quality and an increasingly efficient use of energy. Stalam will be at Cibus Tec 2026, from 27 to 30 October at Fiere di Parma, Hall 6 – Stand B024.

stalam.com



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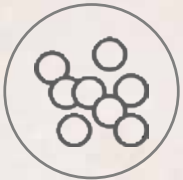
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AL.MA. DEVELOPS THERMOFORMING SYSTEMS TAILORED TO SPECIFIC PRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS, COMBINING FLEXIBILITY, PROCESS STABILITY AND PACKAGING QUALITY.

As food manufacturers expand their product portfolios and respond to increasing market demands, packaging operations are becoming more complex. Greater product variety, multiple packaging formats and shorter production runs require thermoforming systems capable of combining efficiency with flexibility, without compromising product quality or operational reliability.

In this context, selecting a thermoforming machine is no longer simply a question of production speed. Increasingly, manufacturers are looking for solutions that can integrate seamlessly into existing production environments while remaining adaptable to future requirements.

AL.MA. approaches every project by





analysing the customer's production process, taking into account product characteristics, packaging specifications, production targets and expected future developments. Rather than proposing a standard configuration, the company develops thermoforming solutions designed around the specific needs of each application. This customised engineering approach allows each machine to integrate naturally into the production line while providing the flexibility required to support changing market demands and new packaging formats.

Flexibility for increasingly diversified production

The growing number of SKUs, private-label products and customised packaging solutions has made production flexibility a key competitive factor for food manufacturers.

One of the most critical aspects of flexible production remains format changeovers, which traditionally involve tooling replacement, mechanical adjustments and pro-

duction downtime.

To address this challenge, AL.MA. thermoforming systems can be configured with multiple formats already installed on the machine. Operators simply select the required format via the control panel, while the appropriate forming, sealing and cutting stations are activated automatically. This solution significantly reduces change-over times, minimises operator intervention and helps maintain production continuity throughout the manufacturing process.

Engineering designed for process stability

Reliable packaging performance depends on the interaction of multiple engineering solutions rather than on a single technological feature.

AL.MA.'s chain-driven film transport system ensures accurate film indexing throughout the production cycle, reducing the risk of misalignment and jamming while contributing to more efficient material utilisation.

During the forming phase, dedicated pre-heating systems combined with plug-assisted forming technology promote more uniform material distribution, enabling the production of complex tray geometries while maintaining film integrity. The piston-operated sealing system applies consistent pressure across the entire sealing area, ensuring reliable seal quality and helping preserve the modified atmosphere required to extend product shelf life.

The process is completed by a scissor-cutting system that produces clean, precise edges without stringing, improving package appearance while reducing maintenance requirements.

A production-oriented approach

As packaging requirements continue to evolve, thermoforming systems must offer more than high output. They need to combine flexibility, process stability and long-term reliability while adapting to increasingly diversified production environments. By developing each system around the customer's specific production objectives rather than a predefined machine configuration, AL.MA. aims to provide manufacturers with thermoforming solutions capable of supporting both current production needs and future growth.

alma-packaging.com



AETNA GROUP *at Cibustec 2026:* *integrated technologies and innovation*

FROM 27 TO 30 OCTOBER, AETNA GROUP WILL BE EXHIBITING AT CIBUSTEC 2026, THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR FOR FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCESSING TECHNOLOGIES, TAKING PLACE AT THE PARMA EXHIBITION CENTRE.

Aetna Group is preparing for Cibustec, the international exhibition dedicated to food and beverage processing technologies, scheduled to take place in Parma from 27 to 30 October. The Group will exhibit in Hall 3, Stand A014, across a total area of 180 square metres.

"The stand will showcase some of the Group's most successful solutions," the company explained a few weeks ahead of the event.

Among the technologies on display will be Robot S7, the self-propelled wrapping robot developed by Robopac, Aetna Group's main brand. The machine can wrap loads of any shape, size and weight thanks to its distinctive ability to move around the pallet. It combines flexibility, operational safety and high efficiency, meeting load handling and stabilisation requirements across a wide range of production environments. Also on display will be Masterwrap, Robopac's semi-automatic rotary-arm wrapping machine designed to stabilise heavy and unstable loads.



Sotemapack will present the WA20, an automatic case packer designed to package products using die-cut cardboard blanks. Robopac's Prasmatic TCS will represent the Group's range of case packers for medium- and high-speed production, with an

output capacity of up to 55-65 packs per minute.

Aetna Group Food Experience: the exhibition continues at the Group's production sites

Aetna Group's participation in Cibustec will be complemented by the Aetna Group Food Experience, a programme of open-house events offering visitors the opportunity to explore the Group's end-of-line innovation technologies directly at its production facilities. The initiative is designed to provide a natural continuation of the Cibustec exhibition experience.

The first event will take place at OCME's historic headquarters in Parma and will focus on flexible packaging, with particular attention to the bakery, cereals and pasta, pet food and baby food sectors.

The experience will also feature technologies from Sotemapack and Mey-



pack, whose portfolios, alongside that of OCME, include packaging, filling, palletising, depalletising and case-packing systems.

The lines will be fully operational during the visits, allowing participants to observe the functions, performance and integration of the different solutions first-hand and providing a practical, immersive experience.

The Aetna Group Food Experience programme will continue with further events dedicated to application testing, held both at the OCME plant and at Robopac's facility in Castel San Pietro Terme. The latter serves as the Group's headquarters and centre of excellence for wrapping technologies.

One of the highlights will be a visit to TechLab, the Group's network of accredited laboratories, registration No. 1772L, where real transport conditions are simulated and analysed to identify the most suitable packaging and load-stabilisation configuration.

Scientific testing is used to determine the most effective solution for ensuring maximum product protection while minimising packaging material consumption, in line with the Group's efficiency and sustainability objectives and with international regulatory requirements.

A technical talk on carton packaging for the beverage industry

A technical meeting dedicated to the



handling of brick-shaped carton containers for the dairy and fruit juice sectors will also take place at the Aetna Group stand.

Led by Robopac specialists, the talk will examine the latest solutions for handling, packaging and stabilising this type of product, while presenting application examples and best practices developed by the Group.

solutions tailored to the needs of the global food industry, further strengthening its role as a key partner for companies investing in innovation, quality and competitiveness", the company concluded.

aetnagroup.com

A technological architecture serving the food industry

"For Aetna Group, participating in Cibus-tec means much more than simply attending an international trade fair. It is an opportunity to showcase an integrated technological architecture combining automation, packaging, end-of-line systems, logistics and applied research.

Thanks to the synergies between the Group's brands and the opportunity to see the technologies both at the exhibition and directly within the production facilities, customers and partners will be able to follow a complete journey, from design and testing through to real industrial applications.

Through its participation, Aetna Group is renewing its commitment to developing increasingly efficient and sustainable



TECHPARTNER *strengthens its role as a gateway to the Italian food processing market*

WITH STEFANO COLORI AT THE HELM, THE MODENA-BASED COMPANY IS REPOSITIONING ITSELF AS A STRATEGIC PARTNER FOR INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGY PROVIDERS SEEKING TO ENTER AND EXPAND IN ITALY.

A new model of industrial partnership is taking shape in the heart of Italy's Food Valley. Techpartner, a company with more than 30 years of experience in food processing, is entering a new phase of development, with the aim of becoming a key reference point for international companies seeking to establish or consolidate their presence in the Italian market.

The company combines technical expertise, local market coverage and an in-depth understanding of the production requirements of the Italian food industry. Its role extends from regulatory and commercial support to process customisation, line integration and after-sales service.

The transformation is being led by Stefano Colori, who was appointed Managing Director one year ago. With

three decades of international experience in the sector, Colori is pursuing a strategy focused on long-term partnerships with global technology providers and on supporting them throughout the complexities of the Italian market.

A new organisation for international growth

During his first year at the company, Colori focused on strengthening Techpartner's governance and restructuring its organisation around future growth.

The renewed team now includes expertise across sales, product management, key account management, service operations, business development and management control.

"When I joined the company, the priority was to place people at the centre



Stefano Colori, CEO Techpartner

of the organisation and identify new growth opportunities, with particular attention to business efficiency and sustainability," Colori explains.

"Today, we can rely on a strong team,





an established product portfolio and a solid financial position supported by Process-Pack International, the industrial group to which Techpartner belongs. We are investing in people, equipment and the evaluation of strategic acquisitions. The objective is to guide Techpartner through a new phase of development, in line with the transformation of the food industry."

The company is therefore moving beyond its traditional role as a supplier of machinery and materials, positioning itself as a full-solution partner capable of combining technical know-how, market knowledge and industrial expertise.

The partnership with Sealpac

A key step in this strategy is the agreement with Sealpac International, a global specialist in tray-sealing and thermoforming technologies.

The partnership broadens Techpartner's product portfolio and strengthens its position in the Italian food packaging market. It combines Sealpac's technological expertise with Techpartner's knowledge

of local production requirements, commercial dynamics and customer support. Sealpac had previously explored different opportunities for collaboration in Italy and has now selected Techpartner as its local partner, recognising the company's technical competence, market presence and organisational structure.

The objective is to build a stable, long-term alliance capable of supporting Italian food manufacturers with integrated packaging solutions and dedicated local service.

An international technology network

The partnership with Sealpac forms part of a broader international network developed by Techpartner over the years.

The company's expertise is rooted in the legacy of the Italian branch of Poly-clip System, the German specialist in clipping technologies. This relationship continues to provide technical continuity, specialist know-how and access to the company's complete range of machinery and original spare parts.

Techpartner also works with Scansteel

Foodtech, the Danish manufacturer of complete processing lines for the meat industry, integrating and adapting its technologies to the requirements of Italian processors.

Its network also includes Eberhardt, a German company specialising in integrated pressing technologies, and Visko-Teepak, a Finnish-American multinational operating in the production of fibrous casings.

Together with its own portfolio of natural, fibrous, collagen and plastic casings, these partnerships allow Techpartner to offer an integrated combination of equipment, materials and application services. The company therefore acts as a bridge between global technology suppliers and Italian manufacturers, adapting international solutions to the specific requirements of the national market.

Sustainability as a selection criterion

Sustainability has become an increasingly important competitive factor in the food industry.

New European packaging rules, growing



demand from retailers for recyclable solutions and greater consumer awareness are turning environmental performance into a structural requirement throughout the supply chain. In this context, Techpartner selects technologies and international partners capable of contributing to environmental, operational and economic sustainability.

The aim is to support Italian food manufacturers in the transition towards more responsible production models without compromising productivity, product quality or process performance.

This direction also reflects the wider strategy of Process-Pack International, which is already working on the implementation of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, introduced by Directive (EU) 2022/2464 and designed to strengthen ESG reporting requirements.

Techpartner at Cibus Tec 2026

Techpartner will present its expanded portfolio and international partnership model at Cibus Tec 2026 in Parma.

The exhibition is one of the main meeting points between the Italian food industry and international manufacturers of food processing and packaging technologies.

For foreign companies looking to enter the Italian market, the Techpartner stand will provide an opportunity to meet a local partner with detailed knowledge of the country's production chains, regulations, commercial environment and sector-specific requirements.

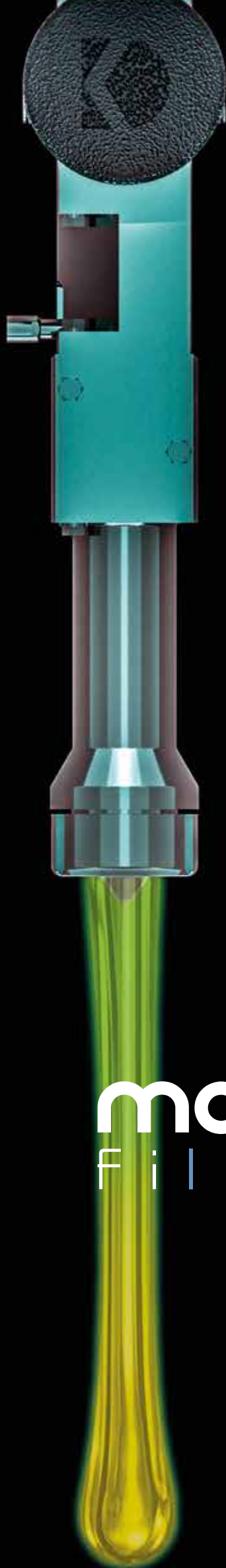
The company will occupy an exhibition area of more than 250 square metres, including a large section dedicated to live machinery demonstrations.

The space will be designed to offer visitors a direct view of technologies and application solutions operating

under realistic production conditions. Through its established network of international partners, Techpartner will present itself at Cibus Tec as a hub of technical and application expertise for food processing and packaging. The event will also provide a platform for developing new collaborations, exploring joint projects and discussing how global technologies can be adapted to the requirements of Italian food manufacturers.

By combining international partnerships with local technical support, Techpartner aims to provide foreign technology suppliers with a structured route into the Italian market and to support the competitiveness of domestic food processors.

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IMA FLEXIBLE PACKAGING HUB: *one ecosystem for complete packaging solutions*

FROM PRIMARY PACKAGING TO END-OF-LINE SYSTEMS, THE IMA FLEXIBLE PACKAGING HUB BRINGS TOGETHER TECHNOLOGIES, EXPERTISE AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE CENTRES TO HELP MANUFACTURERS DEVELOP INTEGRATED, SUSTAINABLE AND FUTURE-READY FLEXIBLE PACKAGING LINES.

The growing complexity of flexible packaging requires manufacturers to look beyond individual machines and adopt integrated production systems capable of combining efficiency, flexibility and sustainability. To address this need, the IMA Group has developed the IMA Flexible Packaging Hub, an ecosystem that brings together technologies, expertise and brands into a single platform for complete flexible packaging solutions.

Rather than focusing on standalone equipment, the Hub is designed to provide customers with a single point of access to fully integrated packaging lines. By combining primary, secondary and end-of-line technologies, the IMA Flexi-



ble Packaging Hub supports manufacturers across a wide range of industries, including food, pet food, pharmaceuticals and nonwoven products, delivering solutions tailored to specific production requirements.

The strength of the Hub lies in the complementary expertise of several specialized IMA companies and brands, including IMA Ilapak, IMA Eurosicma, IMA Record, IMA Delta Systems, IMA Fillshape and IMA Tecmar. Together, they offer decades of experience in flexible packaging technologies, allowing customers to access an extensive portfolio through a single integrated organization.

The available technologies cover virtually every stage of the packaging process. Horizontal and vertical form-fill-seal systems, stand-up pouch solutions, bagging technologies, feeding



and handling systems, weighing equipment and advanced automation can all be combined into complete production lines engineered to maximize efficiency, reliability and operational flexibility.

The Hub's role extends beyond equipment supply. Acting as a strategic partner throughout the entire project lifecycle, IMA supports customers from concept development and testing through implementation and long-term optimization. Thanks to the collaboration between multiple IMA centres of excellence, each packaging line can be engineered to meet specific production objectives while ensuring scalability and consistent performance.

Sustainability is another key focus of the IMA Flexible Packaging Hub. The technologies are designed to process a wide range of recyclable and environmentally responsible materials, including mono-material structures and paper-based packaging solutions that support circular economy objectives. Combined with automation, connectivity and digital technologies, these capabilities help manufacturers improve productivity while reducing environmental impact without compromising package quality or product protection.

The flexibility of the platform also allows manufacturers to manage numerous packaging formats, including flow wraps, vertical bags, stand-up pouches, stick packs and sachets. This versatility enables producers to adapt quickly to changing consumer preferences and evolving market demands.

Applications cover a broad spectrum of industries. In the food sector, the Hub provides solutions for bakery products, biscuits, breakfast cereals, chocolate and confectionery, dairy products, meat, IQF products, fresh produce, pasta, rice, snacks, seafood and coffee. The offering also includes dedicated technologies for pet food, pharmaceutical products, nonwoven applications and other industries requiring high productivity and stringent quality standards. A distinctive element of the ecosystem is the expanding network of IMA Flexible Packaging Hub Customer Experience Centres. More than conventional demonstration facilities, these centres provide collaborative environments where customers can

test materials, evaluate packaging concepts and validate production solutions under real operating conditions before making investment decisions.

Developed in close connection with the IMA OpenLabs initiative and continuously expanding across strategic locations worldwide, the Customer Experience Centres give manufacturers direct access to IMA specialists and application expertise. Visitors can evaluate complete packaging lines, assess production performance and explore different technologies across multiple product categories.

Demonstration areas include horizontal and vertical form-fill-seal systems, complete flow-wrapping lines, feeding technologies, cartoning solutions and innovative packaging concepts for numerous applications. Advanced research and development capabilities further strengthen the centres, with robotic workstations, vision systems, customized handling solutions and rapid prototyping tools supporting the development and validation of tailor-made packaging concepts.

By integrating technologies, engineering expertise, automation and customer collaboration within a single ecosystem, the IMA Flexible Packaging Hub enables manufacturers to simplify increasingly complex packaging projects while preparing for future market challenges. Through complete packaging lines, continuous innovation and a global network of Customer Experience Centres, the Hub offers a comprehensive approach to the evolution of flexible packaging.

ima.it



What's new at MTH

MTH BRINGS THE NEW NOVA PLUG-IN MONOBLOC AND THE ALGOR COLD ROOM TO CIBUS TEC.

Founded in 1942, MTH is now one of the main players in industrial and commercial refrigeration. With a complete range, entirely produced in Italy, it covers the entire cold chain, integrating design, construction, and application expertise. This know-how translates into increasingly high-performance, efficient, and sustainable solutions, such as the new Nova plug-in monobloc and the Algor cold room.

Nova: the evolution of the plug-in monobloc

Nova represents the latest generation of monoblocs for cold rooms. Available in two sizes, for medium (-5°C / + 10°C) and low temperatures (-25°C / -15°C), it uses environmentally friendly R290 natural gas, combining sustainability and high performance.

Its compact design allows it to be installed even on narrow panels, while the new internal layout of the components and the single-sheet casing facilitate maintenance operations. The range includes hermetic reciprocating compressors, latest-generation electronic motor fans, and high-efficiency corrosion-resistant heat exchangers.

In terms of connectivity, Nova integrates a new controller with an optional Wi-Fi module for remote control and simultaneous monitoring of multiple units, meeting the needs of advanced supervision and centralized management of systems.

Algor: modularity and solid construction

Algor is a modular cold room manufactured entirely in Italy, consisting of panels that can be configured according to specific customer requirements and available in four thicknesses. Suitable for positive and negative temperatures down to -25°C, it is available in single and multi-compartment versions and in stainless steel for highly aggressive environments.

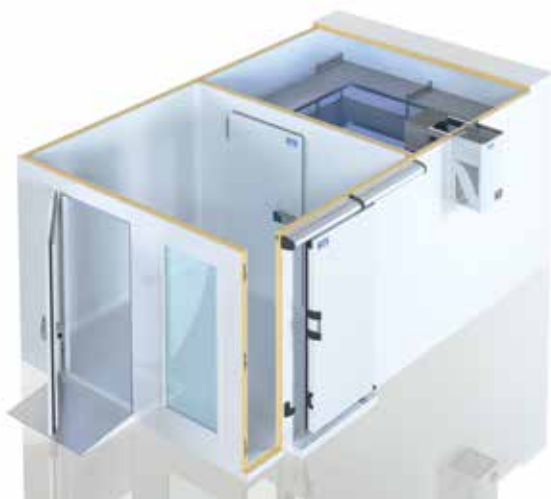
The panels, which do not have plastic corner pieces, use a male-female system with eccentric hooks that guarantees a hermetic seal and quick assembly. The system is completed by the new semi-recessed door, designed to reduce the external footprint, together with a wide range of accessories for a tailor-made configuration.

To support its offering, MTH assists customers throughout all stages of



the project: from preliminary consulting and technical design to after-sales service, ensuring operational continuity and reliability over time. With Nova and Algor, the company consolidates its integrated vision of refrigeration, focused on efficiency, sustainability, and service.

mth.it



SM+

When flexibility meets performance



Volpak introduces SM+, a modular pouching platform combining advanced mechatronics with unmatched flexibility.

Designed for dynamic FMCG production, SM+ integrates HFFS, premade and hybrid configurations, handling multiple pouch styles, formats and materials—including mono-material and paper-based solutions.

Its independent magnetic shuttle system and modular architecture enable fast changeovers, precise process control and seamless switching between SKUs and batch sizes.

Operating at more than **260 ppm**, SM+ adapts from small customized runs to high-volume production with maximum efficiency.



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PACK EXPO INTERNATIONAL

2026: *the future of packaging and processing*

FROM ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ROBOTICS TO SUSTAINABILITY, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND SMART MANUFACTURING, PACK EXPO INTERNATIONAL BRINGS THE PACKAGING AND PROCESSING INDUSTRY TOGETHER IN CHICAGO FOR ITS LARGEST EDITION EVER.

PACK EXPO International 2026 brings together the technologies, trends and industry expertise shaping the future of packaging and processing. Taking place from 18 to 21 October at McCormick Place in Chicago, this year's edition is the largest in the show's history, reflecting the rapid transformation of manufacturing driven by artificial intelligence, automation, sustainability and workforce development.

The exhibition features more than 2,600 exhibitors across 1.3 million net square feet of exhibition space and brings together approximately 48,000 professionals representing more than 40 industrial sectors.

The event covers virtually every aspect of packaging and processing, including food and beverage, pharmaceuticals, life sciences, personal care, logistics, supply chain, pet food and industrial manufacturing, offering visitors a broad overview of the latest technological developments. Among the dominant themes of this year's exhibition are artificial intelligence, automation and robotics. As AI applications become increasingly integrated into packaging equipment, manufacturers are moving beyond isolated automation projects towards more connected and intelligent production environments capable of improving efficiency, quality and operational flexibility.

Workforce development represents another major focus. The shortage of skilled technical personnel continues to affect manufacturers across North America and beyond, encouraging greater investment in automation, digital technologies and employee training. Rather than replacing

workers, many of these technologies are designed to simplify operations, support knowledge transfer and improve productivity.

Sustainability also remains high on the industry's agenda. Visitors can explore solutions designed to reduce material consumption, improve recyclability, optimise resource efficiency and support compliance with evolving environmental regulations, including Extended Producer Responsibility requirements.

Beyond the exhibition itself, PACK EXPO International features an extensive educational programme with more than 150 free sessions covering topics such as the state of the packaging and processing industry, recycling, logistics, supply chain management, material handling, GS1 Sunrise 2027 and digital transformation. The educational stages offer practical insight into the technological, operational and regulatory developments influencing the sector, giving attendees the opportunity to combine direct contact with new solutions with a broader understanding of the changes affecting the market.

This year's edition also introduces several initiatives designed to improve the visitor experience. The new SMB FastTrack programme helps small and medium-sized businesses identify exhibitors and educational sessions most relevant to their specific needs, while expert-led PACK EXPO Discovery Tours guide attendees through selected technology areas and emerging innovations.

Dedicated pavilions focusing on logistics, healthcare packaging, confectionery, containers and materials, reusable packaging, printing technologies and food and



beverage processing once again provide targeted environments where visitors can explore specialised solutions and meet industry experts.

Networking and career development also play an important role throughout the event. Special initiatives include A Night Out with PACK gives BACK®, the Packaging & Processing Women's Leadership Network Breakfast, the Young Professionals Networking Reception and several programmes dedicated to students and future professionals entering the industry. More than simply a trade exhibition, PACK EXPO International continues to serve as a meeting point where technology suppliers, manufacturers and brand owners exchange ideas, identify emerging trends and evaluate solutions capable of addressing the packaging industry's most pressing challenges.

As digitalisation, automation and sustainability continue to reshape manufacturing, PACK EXPO International 2026 offers a comprehensive snapshot of the technologies and strategies defining the next generation of packaging and processing.

packexpointernational.com

CW 1400

When speed meets quality



ACMA is a global leader in confectionery packaging, renowned for engineering high-performance solutions. With the new CW 1400, the company sets a new benchmark in speed, precision and gentle product handling.

Operating at up to 1.400 pieces per minute, CW 1400 wraps pralines, chocolates and candies with exceptional care thanks to its continuous-motion triple-head system. Designed for flexibility, is compatible with paper-based and mono-material films, combining productivity, quality control and reduced material waste in a single, future-ready platform.



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Artificial intelligence moves beyond AUTOMATION

AS AI ADOPTION ACCELERATES ACROSS THE PACKAGING INDUSTRY, MANUFACTURERS ARE SHIFTING FROM ISOLATED APPLICATIONS TO CONNECTED PRODUCTION SYSTEMS THAT IMPROVE EFFICIENCY, QUALITY AND OPERATIONAL DECISION-MAKING.

Artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming an integral part of packaging and processing operations. As implementation costs decline and software capabilities continue to improve, manufacturers are moving beyond experimental projects and integrating AI into everyday production activities.

According to PMMI's latest Building an AI Advantage in Packaging Equipment report, the industry's approach to artificial intelligence has changed significantly over the past two years. Greater accessibility, stronger confidence in the technology and growing evidence of measurable operational benefits are encouraging companies of all sizes to invest in AI-powered solutions.

Early adoption largely focused on isolated applications, such as quality inspection or predictive maintenance. Today, however, manufacturers are beginning to view artificial intelligence as part of a broader digital manufacturing strategy capable of connecting equipment, production data and operational decision-making.

Among the applications experiencing the fastest growth are machine vision and knowledge transfer. AI-powered vision systems improve inspection accuracy and consistency, while intelligent software helps capture operational expertise and make it available across production teams. Predictive maintenance, regulatory compliance and data transparency are also becoming increasingly common applications.

The next phase of development is expected to be even more significant. Rather than optimising individual machines, AI is gradually evolving towards plant-wide orchestration, where connected systems continuously balance production throughput, product quality, operating costs and energy consumption across multiple stages of the manufacturing process.

This transition reflects the growing availability of production data and increasingly sophisticated analytical tools capable of transforming information into real-time operational decisions. As AI technologies mature, manufacturers are looking beyond automa-

tion itself and towards fully connected production environments where equipment can adapt dynamically to changing operating conditions.

Despite this momentum, implementation continues to present several challenges. Data quality remains fundamental for reliable AI applications, while cybersecurity, accountability for AI-generated decisions and the integration of new software with existing production infrastructure remain important considerations. For many small and medium-sized manufacturers, cloud-based software-as-a-service solutions are emerging as a practical way to reduce implementation costs and simplify adoption.

Successful AI deployment also requires organisational readiness. Rather than simply installing new software, companies need to define clear business objectives, assess their existing digital infrastructure, involve employees throughout the implementation process and encourage collaboration between equipment suppliers, software developers and production teams.

These developments are expected to feature prominently at PACK EXPO International 2026, where exhibitors will showcase AI-enabled technologies ranging from advanced machine vision systems to predictive maintenance platforms and intelligent production management software. As digitalisation continues to reshape manufacturing, artificial intelligence is becoming less of a future concept and more of a practical tool for improving efficiency, flexibility and competitiveness across the packaging industry.

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Universal Pack designs and manufactures high-end VFFS machines and complete lines for single-dose packaging in sachets and stick packs. Since 1965, it has been creating highly customized systems for the food, pharmaceutical, nutraceutical, cosmetic, and chemical sectors, guaranteeing precision, reliability and maximum efficiency for every type of product.

Pack Expo, Cibus Tec and Gulfood Manufacturing will be an opportunity to present Universal Pack's latest innovations: solutions designed to combine sustainability, high performance and total process safety.

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Science in Packaging



Pack Expo
Booth / Stand: N-6269
18 - 21 October 2026
Chicago, USA

Booth / Stand: N-6269



Cibus Tec
Booth / Stand: Hall 2,
Stand M056
27 - 30 October 2026
Parma, Italy

Hall 2, Stand M056



Gulfood Manufacturing
Booth / Stand: Sheikh Saeed
Hall 2 - Stand S2-D3
3 - 5 November 2026
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Hall 2 - Stand S2-D3

UNIVERSAL PACK *Brings Alfa Flexi to the heart of the food packaging market*

FOOD PACKAGING ENTERS A NEW PHASE.

Manufacturers are facing faster-moving markets, broader product portfolios, evolving materials, and higher quality standards. In this environment, the packaging machine is no longer just one part of the line. It affects plant flexibility, pack quality, and competitiveness. Universal Pack will meet the international market at Pack Expo 2026, Cibus Tec 2026, and Gulfood Manufacturing 2026. These exhibitions differ by geography and audience, but they share one question: how can food packaging become more flexible and ready to handle complex products, formats, and materials?

ALFA FLEXI, flexibility at the center

Universal Pack's answer has a clear name: ALFA FLEXI. The most flexible stick pack machine developed by the company will be showcased at Universal Pack's booths as a tangible

example of technology designed for today's food industry. It is a platform created for manufacturers that need to manage multiple products, dosages, formats, and production requirements without compromising process stability or final pack quality.

In food packaging, flexibility means switching more easily from one product reference to another, managing shorter runs, working with different materials, and maintaining consistent pack quality even as production conditions change. For companies with frequent launches and expanding ranges, this adaptability can be the difference between a line that simply runs and a line that is truly competitive.

PPWR, Universal Lab, and sustainable materials

The push toward more circular packaging makes this challenge even more relevant. With the PPWR, the European



Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation, the industry is moving toward stricter requirements on recyclability, reduction of unnecessary packaging, recycled content, and packaging design across the entire life cycle. For food manufacturers, this does not simply mean choosing a new material. It means bringing that material into production without compromising quality, safety, or industrial performance.

This is where Universal Lab becomes a key part of Universal Pack's approach. Built on more than 30 years of scientific research and over 10 years of dedicated laboratory activity, Universal Lab supports the preliminary analysis of products and laminates before industrialization. To date, Universal Pack has tested more than 350 sustainable laminates, building practi-



cal knowledge on how innovative films behave during forming, sealing, dosing, traction, and cutting.

Recyclable laminates, mono-material structures, and paper-based materials can behave very differently from traditional films. Rigidity, film tracking, formability, sealability, heat response, and cutting stability may all change. Through Universal Lab, these variables can be evaluated in advance and translated into machine parameters, process conditions, and validation criteria.

Product, laminate, and machine design

Packaging challenges change from product to product. A soluble powder requires flowability control and dosing stability. A granular product must be handled without compromising precision. A sauce or viscous product requires attention to filling, cleanliness, and speed management. Hygroscopic products require pack integrity and reliable seals.

For this reason, every Universal Pack project starts from the real application. Density, particle size, viscosity, heat sensitivity, dustiness, product behavior, and laminate characteristics all influence the final machine design. The preliminary work carried out through Universal Lab helps optimize each machine around the physical properties of the customer's product and packaging material.

This analysis drives the choice of dosing system, film handling, sealing conditions, control logic, and integration with counting, stacking, cartoning, printing, vision, and quality control systems. The result is not a standard machine adapted to a

product, but a packaging solution engineered around the product, the laminate, and the customer's production objectives.

Performance beyond speed

ALFA FLEXI reflects this philosophy through a platform designed to deliver agile production with the industrial strength the market requires. It was not developed for a single application, but to give food manufacturers a technological foundation that can evolve with the market.

In food packaging, performance is not measured only in cycles per minute. Dosing accuracy, sealing quality, reel stability, waste reduction, ease of operation, and consistent results over time are just as important, especially with extended shifts, different materials, or frequent format changes.

Three exhibitions, three strategic markets

Pack Expo 2026 will be the first major event in this journey. In Chicago, from October 18 to 21, Universal Pack will welcome visitors at Booth N-6269, in an environment focused on automation, productivity, and industrial reliability. ALFA FLEXI will represent a concrete stick pack solution combining versatility, precision, and production continuity.

From October 27 to 30, Universal Pack will be at Cibus Tec 2026 in Parma, at Hall 2, Booth M056. At an exhibition closely connected to food processing and food packaging, the focus will be on application expertise in the food sector: innovative materials, pack quality, line efficiency, and industrialization of new applications.



From November 3 to 5, Universal Pack will bring its technology to Dubai for Gulfood Manufacturing 2026, at Sheikh Saeed Hall 2, Booth S2-D3. In one of the most dynamic environments for the international food industry, ALFA FLEXI will be presented as a solution for markets investing in production capacity, automation, and flexible technologies.

A technology to experience live

Universal Pack's presence at these three exhibitions will be more than a showcase. It will be a journey across three key markets, with a machine on display and a clear message: the future of food packaging requires technologies that can adapt without losing performance. Visitors will be able to see ALFA FLEXI up close, discuss applications, evaluate configurations, explore materials, and understand how a flexible stick pack platform can make production more efficient and easier to control.

For more than 60 years, Universal Pack has developed technologies for stick packs, sachets, and complete lines, working closely with food companies around the world. This experience allows the company to manage complex projects with a practical approach focused on performance and production continuity.

With ALFA FLEXI, Universal Pack brings a concrete answer to Pack Expo International, Cibus Tec, and Gulfood Manufacturing: a stick pack machine designed for manufacturers looking for greater production freedom, control, and performance. At the Universal Pack booths, visitors can see how flexibility becomes a true industrial advantage.

universalpack.com



From cocoa to AI: TECNO3's journey

FROM ITS HEADQUARTERS NEAR ALBA TO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS, TECNO 3 CONTINUES TO GROW THROUGH CUSTOMISATION, CONCEPT ENGINEERING, LABORATORY TESTING AND NEW APPLICATIONS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. WE SPOKE TO CRISTINA CORDERO, SALES ASSISTANT, AND GIULIA BOSCHIERO, MARKETING MANAGER, ABOUT A COMPANY THAT LOOKS TO THE FUTURE WHILE RETAINING ITS TIES TO THE LOCAL AREA AND THE ITALIAN APPROACH TO MANUFACTURING.

“The future belongs to those who know how to build it.” This simple phrase captures a particular vision of Italian industry: one shaped by hard work, expertise, local roots and the entrepreneur's direct involvement. In this vision, history provides a starting point for creating something new every day, rather than a label to display.

Tecno 3's journey can also be understood from this perspective. Founded in 1988, the Piedmont-based company has grown just a few kilometres from Alba, in an area where cocoa, chocolate and hazelnuts are more than ingredients: they are part of a manufacturing culture, a supply chain and a body of industrial knowledge. This proximity has shaped the company's development and is still reflected in its technologies for processing cocoa, chocolate, creams and nuts.

At its heart is the Porro family's entrepreneurial history, which remains very much alive, and, above all, a practical approach to work: listening to customers, understanding their processes, examining their production requirements in detail and developing solutions that are more than machines — tailored responses to specific needs. This ap-



proach is shared by many Italian machinery manufacturers, where relationships matter as much as technology and customisation is often the greatest strength.

For Tecno 3, this means growing while maintaining the links to its origins, as it embraces increasingly international markets, new design tools and a more consultative relationship with customers. We discussed this journey, the

solutions presented at Interpack and the next stages of development with Cristina Cordero, Tecno 3's sales assistant, and Giulia Boschiero, from the company's marketing department.

“Tecno 3 has grown considerably over the years and continues to develop an increasingly international presence,” says Cristina Cordero. “We serve markets that are often far from home, from the United States to Japan, India and Algeria, as well as other parts of Africa, and work with some major international chocolate groups. This also involves extensive travel, customer meetings and trade fair participation: recently, for example, we visited Singapore and Japan. Our proximity to Alba and its hazelnut and chocolate industries remains part of our identity, but over the years we have also installed plants abroad, from Mexico to Australia. Production, however, remains at our Ital-

MDC continuous dosing and mixing

The MDC continuous dosing and mixing system is a Tecno 3 solution designed to dose and mix liquid and solid ingredients precisely, ensuring a uniform and consistent process. The technology operates continuously rather than in batches, allowing production to be managed more smoothly.

The machine can be configured to suit the recipe and incorporate different ingredients while maintaining process control and repeatable results. It is designed for industrial production requiring continuity, dosing accuracy and formulation flexibility.

ian headquarters: assembly and manufacturing are handled in-house, supported by a network of suppliers for certain specialist operations."

What are Tecno 3's main strengths in production and technology?

Tecno 3 has a very broad portfolio, but chocolate processing lines undoubtedly remain one of its strongest areas, Cordero explains. We can cover the entire process, from cleaning cocoa beans to producing finished or semi-finished products. Recently, for example, we signed a contract in Ghana for a line that runs from the initial

product involved in recipe changeovers and makes the operation simpler. There is no fixed limit to throughput, as the machine can be sized to meet production requirements. It is one of our flagship solutions.

How important is customisation in the development of your technologies?

Customisation, Giulia Boschiero explains, is one of Tecno 3's founding values. Every machine begins with active listening to the customer's needs. This also underpins the concept of partnership, which is particularly important to the owners. We



processing of the beans through to the production of blocks.

Another area in which we are particularly well known is melting technology, with our range of melters. In recent years, partly because of rising cocoa costs, many companies have been paying increasing attention to rework: recovering production offcuts or products with visual defects, either in-line or in dedicated areas, then remelting them and returning them to the production cycle. This is becoming an increasingly important issue.

Among our key solutions is the MDC continuous mixer, a machine designed for continuous rather than batch production, which sets it apart from other technologies on the market. It was developed to meet production requirements for customising chocolate, filling creams and spreads by continuously dosing and mixing chocolate, creams, liquid flavourings, powders and solid inclusions of different sizes and types. It reduces the time and quantity of

do more than offer standard solutions: we build bespoke machines, with each project developed around the customer's specific requirements.

Some of the solutions we are focusing on most strongly today reflect this approach. Alongside the MDC continuous mixer, a core technology in our portfolio, as Cristina rightly explained, there is the LMR robotic chocolate moulding line. This is a line we consider particularly important, and we have also secured a patent for it in the United States. MDC and LMR are currently two of the highlights of our technology offering.

This is a very important point, Cordero adds. Customers looking for a standard machine can find manufacturers with clearly defined catalogues on the market. Tecno 3 works differently: we create what I like to call a tailor-made suit, developing solutions around the throughput, available space and specific requirements of each process.

You mentioned customisation and customer relationships. How important is this consultative role?

It is becoming increasingly important. Some customers, Cristina Cordero explains, do not approach us with a fully defined request, but with a production requirement, an industrial project or, in some cases, a new factory to build. This is where what we call concept engineering comes in: drawing on the experience we have gained over the years to help customers identify the most suitable solution for their process.

As we mentioned, it is no longer "just" a matter of choosing a machine, but of considering the entire production setup. A company starting with a greenfield project, for example, may face very different choices: batch processing, with all its implications for processing times, emptying, residues and costs, or continuous processing. Our role is to listen to the customer's requirements, analyse their circumstances and develop a feasibility study that takes account of production targets, space, resources and work organisation.

These projects often involve access to highly sensitive information, always under confidentiality agreements. This makes trust fundamental to the relationship. The aim is not to replace people, but to make the process more efficient and allow the company to use its resources more effectively. Ultimately, the goal is to support the customer in a strategic decision: whether to build a factory that is new only in its physical structure, or to design one that is genuinely new in the way it operates as well.

The establishment of our sister company,

Tecno 3 USA, based in the Atlanta area, is also part of this strategy. Manufacturing and assembly remain in Italy, but having sales and customer service operations in the United States allows us to be more active and responsive in the American market, follow projects more consistently and work more closely with customers.

How important is reducing energy consumption and labour requirements today?

It is very important. Today, a machine must help reduce energy consumption and deliver tangible savings for the customer. The same applies to labour, but this needs to be understood correctly: the aim is not to replace people, but to make the process more efficient. Automation helps streamline certain activities and make better use of available resources, perhaps by moving people from repetitive tasks to other departments where they can create more value. It brings cost savings as well as organisational improvements.

You took part in the latest edition of Interpack. How did the fair go, and which solutions did you highlight?

Interpack, Cristina Cordero comments, once again proved to be an important, highly international and well-organised trade fair. We arrived with a busy schedule of appointments, thanks to thorough preparation, which allowed us to meet many long-standing customers alongside visitors who came to the stand without an appointment. We saw good attendance, with vis-

itors from Italy, France, Germany and emerging markets such as Latin America and Africa. There were fewer American visitors, apart from those with pre-arranged appointments, but overall Interpack remains an excellent networking platform. It is a long and certainly demanding fair, yet it remains central to our industry.

On the technology front, Giulia Boschiero adds, we presented MDC, which attracted considerable interest, and an initial application of artificial intelligence developed by Tecno 3. The project is still at an early stage, but the direction is clear: the aim is to integrate AI into the operator panel, providing ongoing support and helping operators better understand the process and machine operation directly at the machine.

The response from customers was positive, partly because we have not seen solutions of this kind developed to the same extent in the market. Tecno 3 is developing the project in-house, drawing on its process technology, R&D and engineering capabilities, as well as a team dedicated to artificial in-

LMR robotic moulding line

The LMR robotic moulding line is a patented Tecno 3 solution for producing a wide variety of moulded chocolate products. The system is designed to automate the main stages of chocolate moulding: tempered chocolate is deposited into moulds, cooled and then demoulded, with handling managed by robots.

The line replaces most conventional mechanical systems and synchronised mechanisms with ABB robots, aiming to make the process more flexible, precise, modular and compact. The main benefits highlighted by the company include ease of cleaning, reduced maintenance, a smaller footprint, ease of use for operators and greater overall efficiency than a conventional line.

telligence development.

Another aspect highlighted at Interpack was the Lab Test facility, which has been refurbished in recent years and now plays an increasingly central role. Customers can send us their products for testing on laboratory-scale equipment that replicates production cycles. This allows us to provide analytical reports, data and guidance to help optimise recipes and the configurations of new plants.

What are Tecno 3's next trade fair appearances and next steps?

Our next confirmed event, Cordero explains, is Pack Expo in Chicago in October, an important trade fair for our development in the American market. Our participation builds on the work begun with the establishment of our sister company, Tecno 3 USA, and our intention to further strengthen our presence in the United States — a market with considerable potential that requires continuity, a direct presence and close customer relationships.

Further opportunities for international engagement are already planned for 2027, including Fooma and ProSweets, alongside other initiatives linked to overseas markets. We are also considering additional events, such as Anuga FoodTec India and Gulfood Manufacturing in Dubai. These are interesting fairs for regions we follow closely, but we want to define precisely when and how to participate, and with what objectives.

Our direction remains clear: to consolidate our presence in strategic markets and use trade fairs as opportunities to build relationships, listen to customers and develop new projects.

tecno3.com



Under the surface there is much more...

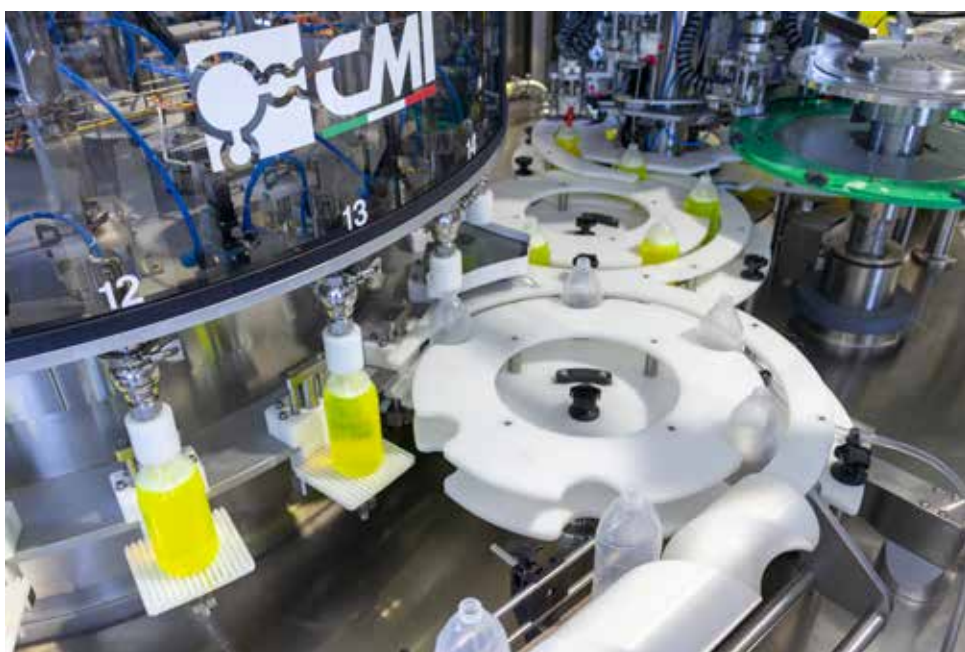
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to thousands of
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all over the world.



CMI INDUSTRIES: *new markets and new partnerships*

A RETURN TO THE NORTH AMERICAN MARKET, THE PARTNERSHIP WITH BLUE BAY PACKAGING, THE GROWING FOCUS ON COMPLETE LINES AND INVESTMENTS IN SERVICE AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. CMI INDUSTRIES SEES PACK EXPO AS A STRATEGIC STEP IN AN INCREASINGLY INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATH.

Flexibility, customisation and service. Three key words that provide a good picture of CMI Industries today, a company that has grown and evolved alongside the industrial packaging sector, an industry that has seen new technologies, shifting balances and changing players emerge year after year. From electromechanical systems and relays to artificial intelligence: a leap that only a few years ago might have seemed almost unimaginable, but which has now become reality. In between lie decades of automation, software, integration and a gradual transformation in the role of machinery manufacturers themselves. "CMI was founded with a strong specialisation in filling and capping ma-



chines, but over time we have broadened our scope and increasingly moved towards complete lines and projects developed around customers' specific production requirements. It is no longer simply about supplying an individual machine, but about integrated systems, service and a relationship with the customer that is increasingly shifting from equipment supply to the overall management of the project," explained Davide Comoli, CEO of CMI Industries. This evolution has also been accompanied by a more structured presence on international markets. Over the years, CMI Industries has expanded its reach through investment, new commercial partnerships and increasing participation in the industry's major trade fairs. Today, particular attention is being



paid to North America. One of the next steps will be Chicago, where the company has confirmed its participation in Pack Expo International 2026. Scheduled to take place from 18 to 21 October at McCormick Place, the exhibition will above all give CMI the opportunity to return directly to the US market after an absence of around ten years and to give substance to a strategy that also relies on new local partnerships.

Pack Expo marks CMI Industries' return to the North American market after several years. How will you approach the exhibition and what do you expect from your participation?

For us, Pack Expo is first and foremost a new starting point. CMI has been largely absent from the North American market for around ten years. During this period, we continued to supply some machines to the United States, particularly to multinational customers that we already supported in Europe, but we did not have a structured commercial presence in the region. In that sense, the North American market needs to become familiar with CMI again and, at the same time, we need to get to know that market closely once more. That is precisely why we decided not to pursue this path alone. We will be attending together with Blue Bay Packaging, a Miami-based company that will represent CMI in the United States. The booth will be under the Blue Bay brand, with CMI participating as a co-exhibitor. We will not be bringing machinery to the show: at this stage, our objective is not to showcase a single technology, but to introduce the company, explain what we can do and build relationships. A large LED wall will show some of the systems we have developed in recent years, giving visitors a

concrete overview of our expertise and the types of projects we can deliver. The partnership with Blue Bay is relatively recent, having started at the beginning of this year, but it has already generated a number of contacts and several enquiries for which we have prepared quotations. Pack Expo will therefore also be an opportunity to meet companies we have already begun talking to and try to turn these initial contacts into concrete projects. Our expectations are high, because we know that some of our competitors already have a strong presence in the United States and are performing well there. For CMI, this means entering an important market where there is still considerable room for us to grow. Our main focus will be the United States and, to some extent, Canada. These are the markets where we see the greatest opportunities and where we intend to concentrate our efforts over the coming years.

You have chosen to return to the North American market together with Blue Bay Packaging. Why did you decide to rely on a local partnership?

Entering the United States without a local structure would have been extremely complex, Davide Comoli explains. We spoke with companies that had already taken this route and decided from the outset to work with a partner capable of providing a local presence, market knowledge and commercial continuity. This is how our

partnership with Miami-based Blue Bay Packaging began at the start of this year. The choice of Blue Bay also stems from an already established network of relationships. The company represents other Italian manufacturers with which we co-operate on complete-line projects, and we were introduced to them through one of our partners, which is also a competitor in certain product areas. I find this particularly interesting because it shows that competitiveness today does not necessarily rely solely on direct competition. When expertise is complementary, cooperation can make it possible to build a more complete offering and take on projects that would be more difficult to manage individually. We manufacture certain types of machinery, while other companies produce different equipment. By combining these capabilities, we can offer customers a more comprehensive solution. I believe this approach is becoming increasingly important for companies of our size. The market is seeing the growth of highly structured groups with operations in several countries and significant commercial resources. An SME cannot necessarily compete using the same tools, but it can compete by leveraging flexibility, specialisation and the ability to build effective partnerships. This is also the approach we are taking to Pack Expo: building a stable presence in the North American market, developing relationships and creating a network that





will allow us to stay closer to customers and become more competitive on complex projects.

What are your expectations for the North American market, and what makes it particularly interesting for CMI at this stage?

Expectations are high because this is a very large market in which CMI currently has only a limited presence, which also means there is considerable potential for growth. We see competitors performing well in the United States, confirming that there is room for technologies and solutions such as ours. At this stage, our main focus is the United States, while also paying attention to Canada. The objective is not simply to increase sales, but to build a more stable presence, develop long-term commercial relationships and gain an increasingly detailed understanding of the market's specific requirements. North America differs from other markets where we are already present and requires a structured approach, both commercially and technically. This is precisely why we have chosen to invest in a local presence, internal training and the adaptation of our solutions

to the standards required in the region. For CMI, North America could become an important growth market over the coming years. We have the technologies, expertise and a strong ability to customise our solutions. The challenge now is to translate these strengths into a recognisable and consistent presence in the market.

Entering the North American market also means dealing with different standards, technologies and production practices. How are you preparing for this?

We have approached this in a structured way, because having a good machine is not enough to compete in a market such as North America. Regulations, technical standards and technology platforms are different, and this requires preparation both in terms of machine design and within the organisation itself. We have therefore launched specific training programmes and worked with specialised organisations to adapt the design of our machines to the requirements of the US market. The same applies to software. Historically, CMI has worked extensively with Siemens,

whereas Rockwell and Allen-Bradley platforms are particularly widespread in the United States. We are therefore investing in training our software engineers so that we can respond to customers' requirements without necessarily imposing the standards we are accustomed to using in Europe. I believe this is an important point: entering a new market also means being able to adapt. We do not simply want to bring what we already do in Europe to the United States. We want to be able to integrate our expertise with local technical and operational requirements. As far as the product itself is concerned, we are relatively confident. Over the years, the European packaging industry has developed a very high technological level and we believe CMI's solutions can also be competitive in North America. The real difference, however, will lie in our ability to combine technology, flexibility and customisation.

We have mentioned customisation several times. How important is this capability today?

It is extremely important to us, because a large part of CMI's produc-

tion is now based on customers' specific requirements. We do not simply start with a standard machine and make minor adaptations. In many cases, we start with the production requirement itself and build the project around it. This approach requires more work during the analysis and design stages, but it enables us to offer solutions that are difficult to replicate through a purely standardised approach. I believe this is one of our main strengths, particularly when competing with manufacturers whose strategy is based primarily on price or high volumes. In recent years, this has also increasingly shifted our focus from individual machines to complete lines. CMI began as a manufacturer of filling and capping machines, but customers are now increasingly asking us to take responsibility for a much larger part of the process. They want to reduce the number of suppliers involved, simplify project management and receive a solution that is ready for production. In this respect, our role is changing. We do not want to be simply a machinery supplier, but a partner capable of managing the project as a whole, coordinating technologies, integration and commissioning. This transformation also addresses a very practical issue: companies have fewer and fewer people with in-depth packaging expertise, so there is a growing need for suppliers capable of taking greater responsibility for the final result.

Artificial intelligence is another area you are currently working on. What practical role could AI play on your machines?

For us, artificial intelligence is not something to add simply because it is widely discussed today. It needs to perform a practical function and address real problems that we see every day at our customers' plants. One of these is the gradual decline in the availability of specialised personnel. Experienced packaging operators are becoming harder to find, staff turnover has increased and the people using a machine often do not yet have an in-depth understanding of the process. This is why we are working towards machines that do more than simply flag an abnormal condition, but can also help operators understand what is happening and determine how to respond. The objective is to develop systems capable of identifying where a problem is located, suggesting possible causes and

guiding the operator through the steps required to resolve it. In the future, therefore, it will no longer be solely up to the operator to know the machine in detail: the machine itself will be able to transfer part of that knowledge to the operator. This could also have a significant impact on service. Today, we receive support requests that, once analysed, turn out not to be caused by an actual machine failure but, for example, by an incorrect configuration or setting. From the customer's point of view, however, a machine that is not producing is still an emergency. More intelligent systems could help diagnose problems earlier, reduce false alarms and make both troubleshooting and preventive maintenance more effective. This is an area in which we are investing and will continue to invest, because we believe that in the coming years the value of a machine will increasingly depend on its ability to support the people who use it.

Looking ahead to 2027, what are CMI Industries' main priorities?

We are coming from a very positive 2025, supported by a strong order book and good continuity in production. In 2026, the market has become more selective and decision-making times have lengthened, but we continue to see interest, enquiries and concrete projects that we are currently working on. In a phase like this, I believe it is essential to maintain a medium-term perspective. For CMI, this means continu-

ing to invest in the areas we consider strategic: international presence, service, technological development and the ability to build strong partnerships. Our return to the North American market fits exactly into this strategy. We do not see it as an initiative linked to a single trade fair, but as a long-term path that we intend to build over time, with a more structured commercial presence and partners capable of supporting us locally. 2027 will need to be the year in which we begin to see the results of this work. The objective is to grow while maintaining the characteristics that have always distinguished us: flexibility, customisation and proximity to the customer. For us, growth should mean above all expanding our presence in international markets without losing speed, expertise or responsiveness. Flexibility, customisation and service, then. Three words that, rather than defining a market positioning, describe the way CMI Industries is seeking to navigate a more complex and selective market environment. The direction is clear: expand its international presence, strengthen partnerships, invest in service and continue developing technologies capable of making operators' work easier. Pack Expo will provide one of the first concrete tests of this strategy, particularly in North America. The projects that follow will tell the rest of the story. But CMI has already chosen the direction it intends to take.

cmiindustries.it



SMI SOLUTIONS *for Latteria Soresina*

TO RESPOND PROMPTLY TO MARKET DEMANDS WHILE RESPECTING THE ENVIRONMENT, LATTERIA SORESINA, AN IMPORTANT ITALIAN COOPERATIVE IN THE DAIRY SECTOR, CONTINUOUSLY INVESTS IN STATE-OF-THE-ART PRODUCTION SYSTEMS, SUCH AS THE SMI EBS 6 KL ERGON STRETCH-BLOW MOULDER.

One hundred and twenty-five years without stopping for even a single day. The history of Latteria Soresina shows how the company has been able to interpret market signals and respond to changing needs through growing efficiency and innovation. Today, all the goodness of milk from cows raised within a certified supply chain and processed according to tradition using innovative techniques is ready to be enjoyed in practical PET and rPET bottles blown by the EBS 6 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulder, equipped with "ReduxAir" moulds, an efficient system that performs stretch-blow moulding operations at lower pressures than those typically used.

Looking to the future in a sustainable way

The goal of Latteria Soresina is to gen-

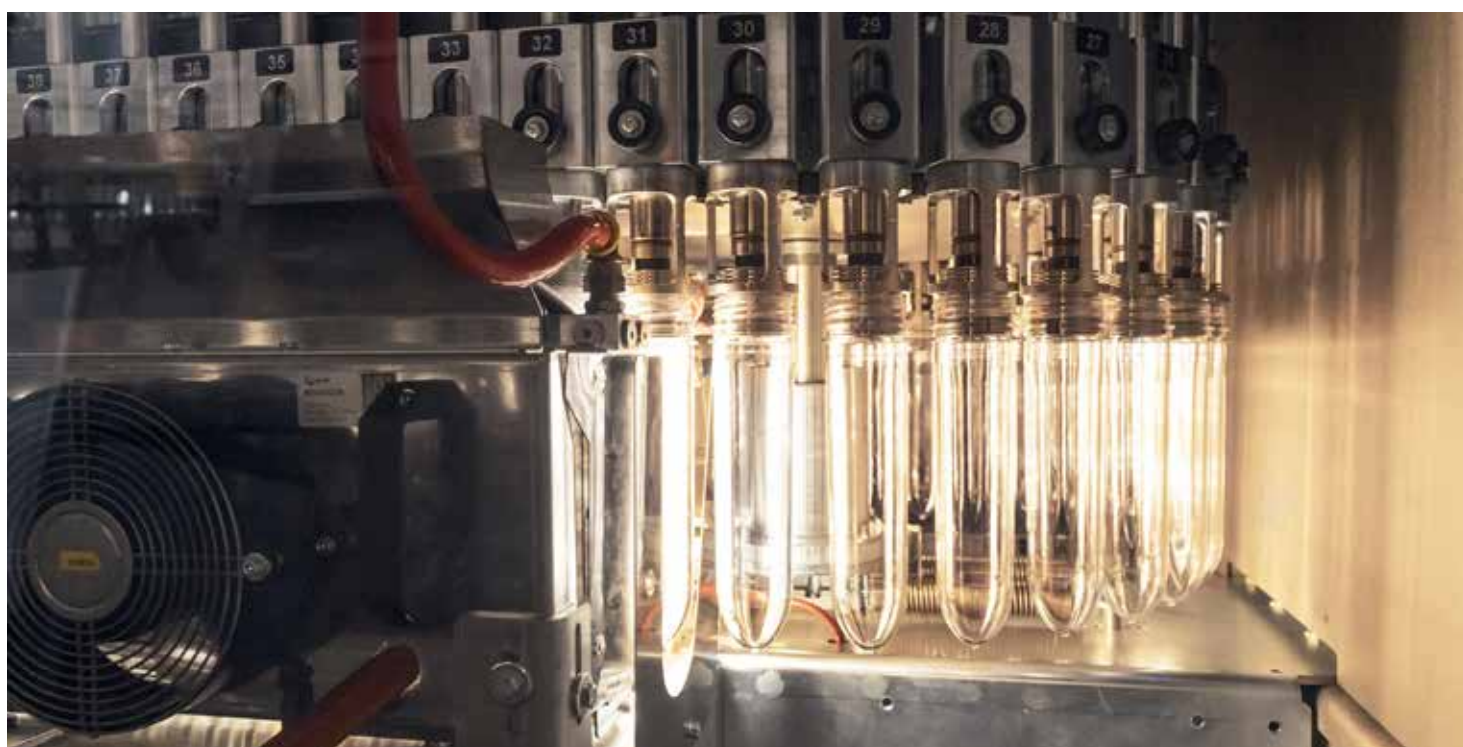
erate a positive impact for society and the dairy-food sector. The passion for quality and the territory translates into concrete choices in the name of sustainability such as environmental protection, animal welfare, and constant support for members, employees, and collaborators. The sustainable supply chain is realised through periodic investments to renew barns, haylofts, and dairy processing plants to reduce environmental impact and energy consumption.

All the breeding members with their over 200 barns located near the Latteria Soresina plants have signed a supply chain agreement that includes careful monitoring of the entire production cycle, with preventive actions and periodic controls.

SMI solutions for Latteria Soresina
In response to the growing popularity

of fresh milk and to produce PET and rPET bottles made with 50% recycled plastic, in sizes of 0.5 L and 2 L, Latteria Soresina has invested in a plant that allows it to increase its operations with a focus on reducing environmental impact. The SMI EBS 6 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulder, installed at the Soresina facility, meets these needs and ensures flexible and sustainable production.

The SMI stretch-blow moulder meets the needs of Latteria Soresina to increasingly use rPET bottles; moreover, the use of preforms with an increasingly lighter weight helps the company optimise distribution and reduce its carbon footprint. To reduce the environmental impact of packaging, the 0.5 L and 1 L containers used for fresh milk have been redesigned to lighten their weight (15% raw material savings).





The SMI stretch-blow moulder has also been tested with the use of white PET preforms with titanium dioxide (TiO_2), which acts as a light barrier, an important element for the production of ESL (Extended Shelf Life) milk.

ReduxAir moulds

The moulds installed on the EBS 6 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulder are equipped with the ReduxAir bottom, which, thanks to specific technical and design features, allows for a much faster release of the air between the outer walls of the bottle and the surface of the mould. It is therefore possible to produce the 0.5 L container with an air pressure of 20 bar and the 1 L container with 25 bar (significantly lower pressures than the approximately 35 bar normally used), ensuring a major advantage in terms of energy savings and environmental protection, thanks to the reduced operation of the high-pressure air

compressor.

Low-consumption preform heating

The innovative and compact preform heating tunnel of the stretch-blow moulders from SMI is equipped with an aluminium diffuser that ensures optimal temperature control and prevents any risk of overheating. Energy costs for the production of the bottles are also reduced thanks to the use of highly energy-efficient IR lamps.

AirMaster recovery system

The EBS 6 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulder is equipped with a two-stage air recovery system called AirMaster, which adds a second device to the standard air recovery system in order to recover and recycle part of the high-pressure blowing air, ensuring significant savings in compressed-air consumption and energy costs.

smigroup.it



FANUC expands robotic machining with the new M-810 series

THE NEW SIX-AXIS ROBOTS COMBINE HIGH PAYLOAD, EXTENDED REACH AND MACHINING ACCURACY FOR LARGE METAL COMPONENTS. ALTHOUGH DEVELOPED FOR GENERAL INDUSTRIAL APPLICATIONS, THE TECHNOLOGY COULD ALSO BE OF INTEREST TO MANUFACTURERS OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCESSING AND PACKAGING EQUIPMENT.

Fanuc has expanded its range of robots for machining applications with the new M-810 series, designed to combine the flexibility of industrial robotics with the precision required for operations on large metal components. The range includes two models, the M-810/270-27B and the M-810/190-20B, with payload capacities of 270 kg and 190 kg respectively. The M-810/270-27B offers a reach of 2.7 metres, allowing the robot to handle larger workpieces and higher machining loads.

The robots can perform operations including milling, drilling and deburring, opening up an alternative to conventional machine tools for applications where component size, accessibility and production flexibility are particularly important. While Fanuc identifies automotive, aerospace and general manufacturing among the main target sectors, the same characteristics may also be relevant to manufacturers of food and beverage machinery. Producers of processing, filling, packaging and handling equipment frequently work with customised metal components, large frames and machine structures, often in relatively small batches. In these applications, the ability to reconfigure a robotic machining cell and approach a workpiece from several directions can provide additional flexibility.

Accuracy and process stability

A key feature of the M-810 series is its ability to detect cutting forces in real time and adapt the machining process accordingly.

The robots use Fanuc's iRCalibration Signature technology, which is designed to maintain absolute positioning and path accuracy even under demanding operating conditions. Increased structural rigidity also helps reduce deviations from the programmed tool path when working under high loads. This combination is intended to provide greater process stability in applications where robotic systems have traditionally faced limitations compared with conventional machine tools.

Six-axis flexibility

The six-axis articulated structure allows the tool to approach the workpiece from several directions, including areas that may be difficult to reach using traditional machining equipment. According to Fanuc, this flexibility can also make production layouts easier to adapt. Cells can be reconfigured or equipment repurposed as production requirements change, potentially making better use of available factory space. For machinery manufacturers serving

the food and beverage industry, where customised equipment and frequent design variations are common, this flexibility may be particularly relevant when producing complex components or managing multiple product families.

Designed for demanding machining environments

The M-810 series has an IP67 protection rating and is designed to operate in industrial environments where coolant, chips and machining residues are present. The robots are controlled by Fanuc's latest-generation R-50iA robot controller and paired with a light-weight touchscreen Teach Pendant, combining trajectory control, usability and cybersecurity features. Fanuc also sees growing potential for robotic machining cells in the production of very large components, including gigacastings, with robots operating around a fixed workpiece.

fanuc.it



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CANNON BONO to launch high-temperature industrial heat pumps

THE NEW RANGE IS DESIGNED TO RECOVER WASTE HEAT FROM INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES AND CONVERT IT INTO USEFUL THERMAL ENERGY FOR HOT WATER AND STEAM PRODUCTION, WITH POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS ACROSS THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY.



Cannon Bono will present its new range of high-temperature industrial heat pumps at CibusTec 2026, taking place in Parma from 27 to 30 October. Developed to support the decarbonisation of industrial processes, the new systems are designed to recover waste heat generated during production and convert it into higher-value thermal energy for the generation of hot water and steam. For food and beverage manufacturers, where thermal energy is required across a wide range of processes, from heating and washing to cooking, pasteurisation and cleaning operations, heat recovery technologies can represent an increasingly relevant tool for reducing primary energy consumption and improving overall plant efficiency.

According to Cannon Bono, the new range can help lower operating costs and reduce CO₂ emissions associated with heat generation by reusing energy that would otherwise be lost. The technology has already been tested under real operat-

ing conditions and is intended for several industrial sectors, including food, pharmaceutical, pulp and paper, chemical and textile production, as well as district heating. The range covers thermal capacities from 300 kW to 4 MW in single-stage configurations, with a Coefficient of Performance (COP) ranging from 2 to more than 6, depending on operating conditions. This means that the systems can deliver up to six units of thermal energy for every unit of electricity consumed.

Different configurations are available using reciprocating compressors selected according to the required capacity and process conditions. The systems use refrigerants with zero Ozone Depletion Potential (ODP) and a Global Warming Potential (GWP) below 5.

Heat recovery for process steam

One of the first installations is already operating at Cartiere di Guarcino, an Italian producer of decorative specialty papers. The HTHP 750/S steam heat pump

recovers thermal energy from the cooling circuit of the plant's cogeneration units and converts it into process steam at 115°C and 1.7 bara. The unit delivers 1,200 kg/h of steam, with a thermal output of 741 kW, an electrical input of 141 kW and a COP of 5.25. Although this first reference installation is outside the food sector, the same operating principle is particularly relevant to food and beverage plants, where significant quantities of low-grade heat can be generated by refrigeration systems, compressors, thermal processes and other production utilities. Recovering this energy and reusing it elsewhere in the process could help manufacturers reduce their reliance on conventional steam generation while increasing the overall energy efficiency of the plant.

Integration with existing utilities

The new heat pumps are designed to integrate with existing industrial systems and can operate alongside Cannon Bono steam generators, allowing coordinated thermal energy production. Integration with automation and control systems also makes it possible to optimise plant operation and adapt thermal output to actual process requirements. "The introduction of industrial heat pumps represents a natural evolution of our technology portfolio," said Leonardo Volpato, General Manager of Cannon Bono. "Manufacturing companies today need to combine competitiveness, energy efficiency and lower emissions. By recovering process heat and integrating with existing systems, this new range provides a concrete tool for addressing the energy transition without compromising reliability or operational continuity".

cannonbono.com



THERMO-MIX

COMBINED PREMIX-PASTEURISER IN ONE COMPACT SKID

FLOW RATE

Capacity range from 500 to 60,000 l/h.

APPLICATIONS

Soft drinks, juices, cocktails and mocktails, wine-based beverages, beers, flavoured waters and more.

CONFIGURATION

Four integrated modules: single-or double-stage deaeration, high-precision ingredient dosing and premixing, inline carbonation, plate or tubular pasteurisation, with optional aroma recovery.

PROCESS CONTROL

Inline beverage analysis for Brix, Diet, CO₂, dissolved O₂, Alcohol and Plato for continuous monitoring.

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changeover

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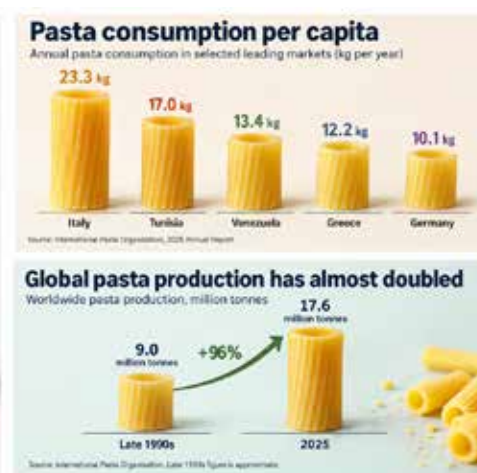
10-12 November 2026
Nürnberg - Germany
HALL 7 | STAND 7-340



Italy's **PASTA** supply chain reaches €13.5 billion

ITALIAN PASTA PRODUCTION REACHED 4.2 MILLION TONNES IN 2025, WHILE EXPORTS CONTINUED TO GROW. THE FIGURES CONFIRM ITALY'S INDUSTRIAL WEIGHT IN A GLOBAL MARKET PRODUCING 17.6 MILLION TONNES OF PASTA EACH YEAR.

Pasta remains one of the most recognisable segments of the Italian food industry, but the latest figures show a production system whose importance goes far beyond the symbolic value of the product itself. In 2025, national production reached 4.2 million tonnes, up 0.8% compared with the previous year. Export volumes also increased by 2.1%, confirming the strong international orientation of a sector that sends a significant share of its output to foreign markets. The economic weight of the industry is outlined in the report "Valore Pasta – Il contributo della filiera dell'industria della pasta per il Made in Italy", developed by The European House – Ambrosetti for the pasta manufacturers of Unione Italiana Food. According to the study, the Italian pasta supply chain generated total turnover of €13.5 billion in 2025, with around €3 billion in added value. The processing stage alone accounts for a significant share of the overall system, confirming the role of pasta manufacturing within the country's wider agri-food industry. The scale of these figures becomes even more significant when compared



with the global market. According to the International Pasta Organisation, worldwide pasta production reached 17.6 million tonnes in 2025. With 4.2 million tonnes produced nationally, Italy alone therefore accounts for almost one quarter of global output. This position is not driven by domestic consumption alone. Italy also remains one of the world's main pasta production and export hubs. In 2024, the country exported more than 2.4 million tonnes of pasta, equal to 58% of national production that year,

for a total value of €4.02 billion. For suppliers of food processing technologies, these figures are far from marginal. Production on this scale requires a broad industrial base involving systems for raw material storage and handling, dosing, mixing, extrusion, sheeting, drying, cooling, quality control and packaging.

This is combined with increasingly important requirements in automation, energy efficiency, production flexibility and process control. These are relevant not only for large pasta manufacturers, but also for machinery and line suppliers required to manage diversified production, multiple formats and different market requirements. The growth of the Italian pasta supply chain therefore carries a significance that goes beyond the value of the finished product. Behind those 4.2 million tonnes lies an industrial system that continues to represent an important market for food processing, automation and packaging technologies.

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According to the latest figures from the International Pasta Organisation, global pasta production reached 17.6 million tonnes in 2025. The worldwide market has expanded significantly over the past few decades. At the end of the 1990s, global production stood at around 9 million tonnes, approximately half the current level. Consumption figures also show how far pasta has spread beyond the markets traditionally associated with the product. Italy remains by far the world's largest consumer on a per-capita basis, at 23.3 kg per year, followed by Tunisia at 17 kg, Venezuela at 13.4 kg, Greece at 12.2 kg and Germany at 10.1 kg. The figures confirm the increasingly international nature of the category and, as a consequence, of the market for the technologies required for its industrial production.

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NIDEC extends Commander S drive range to 11 kW

THE EXPANDED AC DRIVE RANGE TARGETS APPLICATIONS INCLUDING PUMPS, COMPRESSORS, CONVEYORS AND MIXERS, OFFERING MACHINERY MANUFACTURERS GREATER POWER COVERAGE ON A SINGLE COMPACT PLATFORM.

Nidec Drives has expanded its Commander S V2 range of AC drives for induction motors with a new size that extends the available power up to 11 kW. The development allows machinery manufacturers to use the same Commander S V2 platform across a broader power range, with potential advantages in terms of standardisation, installation and system design. These characteristics can be particularly relevant for food and beverage processing and packaging machinery, where applications such as pumps, compressors, conveyors, fans and mixers

are widely used across production lines and auxiliary systems. According to Nidec Drives, the new 11 kW version maintains the compact footprint of the Commander S platform, helping reduce the space required inside electrical cabinets while extending its use to more demanding applications. "In Nidec Drives we focus on developing practical solutions that help customers improve performance while reducing complexity," said Laurent Babaud, President of Nidec Drives. "The extension of the Commander S range reflects this commitment. Customers can now





access higher power ratings while continuing to benefit from the same ease of installation, reliability and efficiency.”

Compact design and simplified commissioning

Commander S V2 is designed for applications requiring straightforward motor control and plug-and-play operation. The new size allows users to standardise a single drive platform across a wider range of machinery, an aspect that can simplify both machine design and maintenance while reducing the number of components and configurations that need to be managed. “Customers increasingly ask for more functionality without an excessive increase in complexity,” said Roxana Suteu, Product Manager at Nidec Drives. “By extending Commander S to 11 kW, we enable users to standardise on a single platform for more applications, while bene-

fitting from one of the most compact drives available in this power range.” The drive is designed for side-by-side installation and features a click-on/off DIN rail mounting system, helping reduce space requirements and simplify wiring inside the electrical cabinet.

Smartphone-based setup and diagnostics

A key feature of Commander S V2 is the Marshal app, supplied as standard and designed to support commissioning, monitoring, diagnostics and technical assistance directly from a smartphone. Based on NFC technology, the app enables configuration even when the drive is powered off and allows parameters to be cloned between units. Nidec Drives states that basic configuration can be completed in around 60 seconds, while the FastStart menu reduces commissioning to four main settings. For machinery manufacturers and plant operators, these functions can

help reduce setup times and simplify troubleshooting, particularly across production environments where several drives are installed on the same line.

Designed for industrial environments

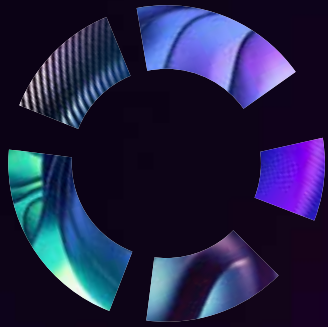
Commander S V2 is also designed for applications where reliability and limited installation space are key requirements. The unit features a protective coating against humidity, dust and corrosion, while integrated functions include intelligent fan control, Modbus RTU communication and an EMC C1 filter. The range is covered by a five-year warranty and is intended to support a variety of motor-control applications across industrial machinery. With the extension to 11 kW, Nidec Drives is broadening the scope of the Commander S platform, with a solution that can also be applied to several functions commonly found in food and beverage processing and packaging lines, from material handling and mixing to pumping and auxiliary systems.

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